

ABSTRACT

Ever Faithfully Yours,

Meredith Marcum

Director: Lauren Weber, MM, MFA

Ever Faithfully Yours is an original one-act musical based on the life and work of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her husband Robert Browning. This thesis captures the life, letters, and poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the form of a song cycle. The story explores her passionate relationship with poet, Robert Browning, as well as her complex relationship to her father, Edward Moulton Barrett. In developing this musical, I utilized Armstrong Browning Library's extensive collection of extant letters, documents, and books to blend history with fiction to create a dramatized portrayal of Elizabeth's early life and her courtship with Robert Browning and her marriage to the poet.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Lauren Weber, Musical Theatre

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM

Dr. Andrew Wisely, Interim Director

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EVER FAITHFULLY YOURS,

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Baylor University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Honors Program

By

Meredith Marcum

Waco, TX

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Writing a musical by yourself is not possible. Theatre is the art form of collaboration and community, and I have been so blessed by the Baylor community and so many others in my life who encouraged me and supported me while writing this thesis.

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Finally, to my mom, to whom this musical is dedicated. Thank you for your endless support and encouragement. I love you.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the Baylor University Honors Program. It is a detailed account of the author's, Meredith Marcum, artistic process in developing an original one-act musical, *Ever Faithfully Yours*, which is based on the life and work of poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The thesis documents the writer's process, beginning with an overview of the research and history of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning. The writer then discusses the process of developing the musical and having it performed in Armstrong-Browning Library. Finally, the thesis ends with a post-production analysis and plans for future development.

Ever Faithfully Yours, was written after years of research; the idea was initially conceived after reading Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Sonnet 43" and learning of her passionate but complicated courtship with fellow poet, Robert Browning. The research process began with discovering as much as possible about her early life, reading books such as *The Barrett's at Hope End; the Early Diary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* by Elizabeth Berridge, and Helen M. Cooper's biography, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Woman & Artist*. These two books inspired much of the action of the musical, as they focus on Elizabeth's early life with her family before Robert is ever introduced into her world. This musical is more than a love story, however, it is about a woman, strong despite her sickness, who is a true artist and activist, speaking her mind when she is silenced, and ultimately defying her father, Edward Moulton Barrett, and death, to choose a life of fulfillment and happiness with Robert Browning. Her life truly begins when she

meets Robert, not because she finds love, (however a nice bonus) but because she finds herself and her voice. When she is able to liberate herself from her father's tyrannical grip, she is finally able to write about the things she wants to, such as child labor laws, slavery, and the treatment and expectations of women in Victorian society. This musical is about *that* decision to be free, to choose life over death, freedom over confinement.

The research then turned to studying Elizabeth's courtship with Robert, as he became an important character in her story. Books such as Daniel Karlin's *The Courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett*, and Julia Markus' *Dared and Done: The Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning*, were helpful in exploring their relationship. Furthermore, Baylor University Library and Armstrong-Browning Library were a significant source of research materials with their large online data base of extant letters and documents. Letters and sonnets are an important device in the musical because they were so significant to Elizabeth. Much of the dialogue throughout is taken directly from letters written by Elizabeth and Robert, and further, two of the sonnets in the musical are also hers. The first sonnet that appears is inspired by Barrett's poem, "The Dream. A Fragment," from her collection *An Essay on the Mind, with other Poems*. This original work is used to reveal Barrett's deep fear of her father as she recalls having nightmares about him throwing her out a window. Sonnet 38 from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is used to convey a passing of time in their relationship, to show that their romance is progressing quickly and passionately. Sonnet 1, also from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, is placed in between part 1 and 2 of the last song, *Ever Faithfully Yours*, to help propel her choice between death and love and to allow her finally to be free from her father's grip. It was important for this story to have real history intertwined within the

fictionalized narrative as it not only makes it feel more real but shows just how romantic their love affair was—that their words are so impassioned that they feel like a fantasy.

The structure of the musical underwent many forms before becoming a two person one-act song cycle. The original idea was to have a 10+ member cast with a full book but two acts didn't serve the intimacy of the story, and frankly that's already been done. The paired down casting and the focus being mostly on music (having the few bits of dialogue underscored) better served the story and allowed the narrative to become much clearer. This structure allows the audience to follow closely the story of Elizabeth and her choices in life and in love. The music posed a particular challenge, since the period of the musical is the 1800's but the period for which it is written is the 21st century. Consequently, a contemporary spin was used to make the story intelligible and relatable to a modern audience. And the themes of their life-story are already so contemporary that the language and music being anachronistic for the time felt appropriate.

Due to the state of the world today when the thesis was composed, the best way to record all the music was digitally into a computer software called Logic Pro X, which allowed the piano accompaniment to be recorded directly into the computer and then turned into a playable audio file that the actors then used in performance. This was a new and challenging undertaking but yielded a very high-quality alternative to having a live accompanist. The performance took place in Armstrong-Browning Library in the Foyer of Meditations. The two actors rehearsed the piece prior to performance following Baylor Universities COVID-19 guidelines, staying masked and socially distanced, and on the

day of performance receiving a negative COVID test so that they could unmask just for the performance/filming.

In the future, this musical has the potential to develop and grow into a two-act musical with a book. Act two would focus more on the life of Elizabeth after she marries Robert, they move to Italy where they have their son Pen, and both of their literary careers thrive. The performance done at Baylor was a staged singing with some movement, but there is a lot more that can be done in terms of staging with this musical as it develops. Furthermore, the music was only piano accompaniment for this version, but it can and will be fully orchestrated in the future. It will be wonderful to one day be able to have a fully realized staging of this musical with an orchestra and a live audience.

Included in this thesis is a bibliography, sheet music, a final draft of the script, and any research notes throughout the process. There is also be a link provided to the filmed performance of *Ever Faithfully Yours*,.

CHAPTER TWO

Video Link

<https://baylor.box.com/s/pucuzq7jnbwvvecwofd6acfk6ums36>

CHAPTER THREE

The Script

Ever Faithfully Yours,
By Meredith Marcum

Time: Nineteenth century
Place: Various Locations in Europe

Characters:
Elizabeth Barrett
Robert Browning

NOTE: Location changes can be implied by lighting and sound
The set should be minimalistic
There should be lots of dance-like movement throughout the entire piece
The “Figure/Elizabeth’s father” can be played by the same actor as Robert Browning or by another actor who isn’t identifiable

Scene 1

Opening

As music plays, lights up on the silhouette of Elizabeth at the end of her life. She stands center stage, a dim light behind her. As she walks forward the light grows brighter until she is at the edge of the stage and the light is blinding. Blackout.

1. “Another Place in My Mind”

Lights up on Elizabeth, 22, though she is young, she is thin and pale, obviously ill. She sits in her room by a window, reading.

ELIZABETH

(Singing)

EVERY DAY A LITTLE TALK CAN HOLD ME
BUT EVERY DAY I WONDER TO MYSELF
I AM AT A LOSS FOR WORDS
I'M BURNING TO ENGAGE ON THE OUTSIDE.

IN MY MIND I SEE MYSELF AT MARKET
THE TOWN IS BUZZING, TEARING BY WITH LIFE
I TAKE A STEP
AND THEN A BREATH (*breath*)
AND...

*As she stands, the set
Behind her melts
away. She has
entered the world of
her mind, the lighting
and mood change
accordingly. This
section almost feels in
slow motion.*

I AM SET IN MOTION
THE WORDS, THEY, COME OUT FLOWING
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE
I FINALLY FEEL ALIVE.

MY FEET, THEY, DON'T FORGET ME
AS I WALK TALL AND PROUDLY
IN A PLACE WHERE I BELONG
THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG

I HAVE SPENT SO MUCH TIME
IN THE PLACES IN MY MIND

MY MIND...

*Lots of movement
throughout this
section contrasting
the almost slow-
motion of the previous
section*

I'VE SPENT TWENTY-TWO YEARS
WITH MY NOSE IN A BOOK
MY HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
TOO SCARED TO TAKE A LOOK
AT THE LIFE THAT'S AROUND ME
AND ALL THAT I'VE MISSED
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE WORLD
I'VE NEVER BEEN KISSED

BUT WITH MY LIFE HANGING IN THE BALANCE
IT'S TIME TO TAKE A RISK
MAKE THE MOST OF THE MOMENT
THOUGH THE MOMENT PASSES QUICK

I AM SET IN MOTION
THE WORDS, THEY, COME OUT FLOWING
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE
I FINALLY FEEL ALIVE.

MY FEET, THEY, DON'T FORGET ME
AS I WALK TALL AND PROUDLY
IN A PLACE WHERE I BELONG
THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG

*Suddenly everything
is still almost grim.*

I KNOW MY PLACE AS THE ELDEST IN THE HOUSE
TAKE CARE OF MY SISTERS
MAKE MY FATHER PROUD

MY MOTHER GROWS SICKER BY THE DAY
HER SMILE FADING THIN
HER LIGHT GROWING DIM
AND I AM NOT TOO FAR BEHIND HER
UNTIL THE OPIUM KICKS IN
TAKES ME AWAY FROM THE PAIN
AND I ESCAPE AGAIN

I LOSE MYSELF IN MY MIND...

*The set returns and
so does she. She sits.*

I FIND MY WAY BACK INTO MY CONSCIENCE
THE SUN IS SETTING AND I AM STILL ALONE

I CLOSE MY BOOK
AND THEN MY MIND

ANOTHER DAY BEHIND

*Elizabeth begins to
change into black, she
is visibly upset but
trying to remain
strong. She drinks
from a small bottle.
The lights are sullen.*

Scene 2

2. "Hope Ends"

ELIZABETH

(to the audience)

1828, my mother has died. Shortly after, father told me he has lost our family home,
Hope End Manor, in a lawsuit and we will be moving to London.

*Elizabeth walks
around the estate and
takes in her room for
the last time.*

(Singing)

SETTLED IN THE AIR
A CHANGE IS NEAR I FEEL
I LOOK AROUND
AND ALL I SEE
ARE ALL THE YEARS BETWEEN

THE ROOM WHERE I GREW UP
AND WHAT'S AHEAD OF ME
THE CHANCE TO START OVER
AND STOP LIVING IN THIS MAKE BELIEVE

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?
WHEN YOU'RE SITTING BY A WINDOW
AND WATCHING YOUR CHILDHOOD
AS IT SLIPS AWAY
I THINK OF MY MOTHER
AND WHAT SHE WOULD SAY

WHERE WILL MY LIFE LEAD
WHEN I START THIS NEW ADVENTURE
I TRY TO BE HOPEFUL
AND NOT LOSE MY FAITH
WAITING FOR SOMETHING
THAT MIGHT COME SOME DAY

WRITTEN ON THESE WALLS
ARE THE THINGS THAT I CAN'T SAY
AND AFTER ALL THESE YEARS
IT'S TIME TO MOVE AWAY

*Elizabeth
holds a
suitcase as the
set disappears
again, she
walks.*

THE SORROW'S BEEN EXHAUSTING
AS WE TRY TO ADJUST
BUT I FIND MYSELF
LOSING HOPE AND LOSING TRUST

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?
WHEN YOU'RE SITTING BY A WINDOW
AND WATCHING YOUR CHILDHOOD
AS IT SLIPS AWAY
I THINK OF MY MOTHER
AND WHAT SHE WOULD SAY

WHERE WILL MY LIFE LEAD
WHEN I START THIS NEW ADVENTURE
I TRY TO BE HOPEFUL
AND NOT LOSE MY FAITH
WAITING FOR SOMETHING
THAT MIGHT COME SOME DAY

*Another
sudden
stillness.
Lights change.*

I AM RUNNING OUT OF ROOM
AS THE PAGES TURN BLANK
AND EMPTYING MY MIND
AS MY DAYS FADE AWAY

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?
WHEN YOU'RE SITTING BY A WINDOW
AND WATCHING THE COLORS
AS THEY FADE TO GRAY
TURNING THE PAGES
WITH EACH NEW DAY

BUT HOPE ISN'T ENDING
THOUGH I'M LEAVING IT BEHIND
AND MAKING A NEW LIFE
AMONG MY OWN KIND

NO, HOPE ISN'T ENDING
THOUGH I'M LEAVING IT BEHIND
AND MAKING A NEW LIFE
AMONG MY OWN KIND

FORGETTING ABOUT
THE PLACES IN MY MIND

Scene 3

*Transition. Now in
London. Robert
Browning holds a
small bound book.*

3. "Somewhere in London"

ROBERT

(to the audience)

My friend, John Kenyon, gave me this book of poems to read by his cousin, Elizabeth Barrett. *(music starts)* I didn't expect to be so struck by her words...but I feel that I know her...

(Singing)

I WAS SOMEWHERE IN LONDON WHEN I FIRST HEARD YOUR VERSE
AND IT SPOKE TO ME SOFTLY AND TOLD ME TO FIND
THIS PERSON WHO WRITES LIKE THEY'VE SEEN THE WHOLE WORLD
WITH WORDS LIKE THE WIND STIRRING SOFT IN MY HEART

I STARE
GETTING LOST IN YOUR VERSE (WORDS?)
AND SUDDENLY

I SEE MY WHOLE LIFE IN REVERSE

I WAS RAISED IN THE COUNTRY
ALL TOO FAMILIAR WITH WEALTH
AND TOLD WHO I SHOULD BE
NOT ALLOWED TO CHOOSE MYSELF

I RESENT MY POSITION
IN AN EMPTY SOCIETY
AND ADMIRE YOUR DISPOSITION
I WISH I SAW THE WORLD YOU SEE

THIS LIFE
THAT I'M NOT LIVING AT ALL
WILL TRY
DESPITE MY DESPERATE CALL
TO PUSH ME AROUND AND MAKE ME BELIEVE
THAT I CAN'T DO ALL I WANT TO ACHIEVE

BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME
I CAN SEE THE LIGHT
IN THE WORDS THAT YOU WRITE

I NEVER THOUGHT THIS COULD HAPPEN
I WASN'T LOOKING FOR LOVE
BUT THEN YOUR WORDS CALLED OUT TO ME
COOING SWEET AS A DOVE

I CAN FEEL YOUR SPIRIT LIKE MINE
ROARING RESTLESS LIKE THE SEA
GETTING LOST IN ANTICIPATION
WONDERING WHEN WE MIGHT MEET

THIS LIFE
THAT I'M NOT LIVING AT ALL
WILL TRY
DESPITE MY DESPERATE CALL
TO PUSH ME AROUND AND MAKE ME BELIEVE
THAT I CAN'T DO ALL I WANT TO ACHIEVE

BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME
I CAN SEE THE LIGHT
IN THE WORDS THAT YOU WRITE

THE WORDS THAT YOU WRITE

I WAS SOMEWHERE IN LONDON WHEN I FIRST HEARD YOUR VERSE
AND IT SPOKE TO ME SOFTLY AND TOLD ME TO FIND
THIS PERSON WHO WRITES LIKE THEY'VE SEEN THE WHOLE WORLD
WITH WORDS LIKE THE WIND STIRRING SOFT IN MY HEART

I START
PEN TO THE PAGE
A LETTER
THE FIRST TIME I'D WRITE YOUR NAME

Scene 4

*Transition. It is
nighttime, music
underscores as
Elizabeth is in a
dream-like state.*

Sonnet 1

ELIZABETH

(To audience)

My brother has gone sailing. I begged him not to, but he held my hand and told me he would be home soon. But I don't know how much longer I can take.

***LAST NIGHT I HAD A DREAM IN A FRAGMENT
MY MIND RACING CLEAR, MY SPIRIT UNBOUND
'A DARK FIGURE STOOD ABOVE ME THEN WENT
AWAY BEFORE I COULD SCARCE MAKE A SOUND***

***HIS PRESENCE LEFT A CHILL THROUGHOUT THE AIR
I AWOKE IN TERROR PRAYING QUICKLY
ASKING GOD TO FREE ME FROM THIS NIGHTMARE
MY FATHER RUSHED IN AND SAW ME SICKLY***

***I FELT A FAMILIAR FIGURE LOOMING
MY FACE FELL STILL, MY MIND AND SPIRIT FROZE
THE SILENCE BROKEN BY A DOVE COOING
I LAY STILL, FEIGNING SLEEP, MY FATHER GOES***

***LAST NIGHT I HAD A DREAM LEAVING NO TRACE
TO AWAKE TO MEET MY FATHER'S DARK FACE***

Scene 5

*Transition. Elizabeth
holding a letter,
visibly upset*

4. "Somewhere in London (reprise)"

ELIZABETH

(Singing)

I WAS NOWHERE NEAR LONDON
WHEN FATHER FIRST SENT THE NEWS
AND HE CAME TO ME QUICKLY
AND TOLD ME HOW YOU
HAD BEEN SAILING AT SEA
WITH WEATHER SO CALM
AND WATER SO BLUE

I LAY WAITING FOR YOU
FOR THREE WEEKS
I WOULDN'T LET GO

BUT AS THE DAYS KEPT ON PASSING
YOU DIDN'T RETURN

My brother...is *(beat)* dead.

(she falls to her knees weeping. She rips up the letter.)

5. "My Days Go On"

ELIZABETH

(Singing)

NOT A MOMENT PASSES
THAT I DON'T MISS YOUR FACE
THAT I PRAY THAT I COULD TAKE IT BACK
OR I COULD TAKE YOUR PLACE

IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS
I ALWAYS THOUGHT I'D BE THE FIRST TO GO

EVEN THOUGH
YOU ARE GONE
MY DAYS THEY STILL
GO ON AND ON

AND EVEN THOUGH
YOU'VE LEFT ME HERE
THE SUN WILL STILL RISE
AND THE NIGHT WILL STILL FALL
AND MY DAYS WILL GO ON

I HOLD ONTO THE MEMORIES
AND TRY TO MAKE THE MOMENTS LAST
FROM THE DAYS WHEN WE DIDN'T KNOW
THE TIME WE WOULDN'T GET BACK

"I KNOCK, I CRY, UNDONE, UNDONE!
IS THERE NO HELP, NO COMFORT
NONE?"

EVEN THOUGH
YOU ARE GONE
MY DAYS THEY STILL
GO ON AND ON

AND EVEN THOUGH
YOU'VE LEFT ME HERE
THE SUN WILL STILL RISE
AND THE NIGHT WILL STILL FALL
AND MY DAYS WILL GO ON

I HEAR YOU TELL ME
NOT TO GRIEVE
I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU
WHY DID YOU LEAVE?

EVEN THOUGH
MY HOPE IS GONE
MY DAYS THEY MUST
GO ON AND ON
WITH THE LOVE THAT YOU LEFT ME
I CAN STILL REMAIN
THOUGH CLOSE TO MY OWN DEATH
AND MY LAST REFRAIN

WHILE AT MY LOWEST
WAITING TO BE DEAD

TO MY SURPRISE
A LETTER CAME INSTEAD

6. "The Letter"

ROBERT
(Singing)

DEAR MISS BARRETT, I MUST BE TERSE
I READ YOUR WORK
AND I LOVE YOUR VERSE

AND FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO OUT OF THE BLUE
BUT HONESTLY, DEAR, I AM IN LOVE WITH YOU

ELIZABETH
(Singing)

COULD THIS BE WHAT I NEED TO MOVE ON FROM MY GRIEF
DOES HE MEAN WHAT HE SAYS WHEN HE SAYS HE LOVES ME

HE TOLD ME A STORY OF A TIME IN THE PAST
WHEN HE AND JOHN KENYON CAME WALKING PAST
HE STOPPED ON MY STREET AND STARED AT MY WINDOW
LONGING TO SEE ME BY THE CANDLE'S GLOW
BUT RETREATING SO QUICKLY FOR FEAR OF REJECTION
CAN THIS BE REAL LIFE?
DOES HE WANT A CONNECTION?
HE ASKED IN HIS LETTER IF WE COULD MEET
SAYING HIS SIGHT WOULD BE BETTER THAN HIS VIEW FROM THE
STREET...

COULD THIS BE WHAT I NEED TO MOVE ON FROM MY GRIEF
DOES HE MEAN WHAT HE SAYS WHEN HE SAYS HE LOVES ME?

I START
PEN TO THE PAGE
A LETTER
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY

ROBERT
I will joyfully wait for the delight of your friendship and the spring.

Scene 6

*Transition.
More letters
have appeared
hanging.*

ELIZABETH

(to audience)

By Spring of 1845 we had sent quite a few letters, but I am still reluctant to meet him. I fear that he will not find me as charming in person as he does on paper.

The Letter Playoff

*Robert enters the
opposite side of the
stage. He writes.
She reads. As they
“send” their letters,
letters drop from all
around and hang in
the air, filling the
stage.*

ROBERT

I can't help but feel you mistrust me or have misjudged me. I want to see *you*.
Once we meet, I can't imagine that my feelings won't only
grow stronger for you.

ELIZABETH

Fine. “If you care to come see me, you can come.” But I warn you, “there is nothing to see in me or to hear in me.” If you still care to come, it must be in the afternoon, after two and before six o'clock. And if some “unforeseen obstacle” should arise, I may have to cancel our arrangement.

ROBERT

Wonderful! Tuesday, the 20th at 2 pm, then. And since my time is of no importance at all to me, it won't matter if you cancel, I will simply “come again and again and again.”

ELIZABETH

(nervously)

“I will be ready on Tuesday, I hope.” But of course, please do not come if you have a headache or anything of the sort... *(beat)* “Well! We are friends until Tuesday- and after, perhaps.”

Scene 7

*Transition to Robert
as he prepares to
meet Elizabeth.*

7. “Good Enough For You”

ROBERT

(Singing)

I’M IN MY HEAD
I’M OUT OF MY MIND
WHAT MADE ME THINK
I DESERVE TO FIND
A WOMAN LIKE HER
WITH WORDS LIKE THE WIND STIRRING SOFT IN MY HEART
I AM NOT SURE

*Lights up on
Elizabeth,
nervously pacing
her room*

ELIZABETH

(Singing)

I CAN’T BELIEVE
HE WANTS TO MEET ME
WHAT MADE HIM THINK
THAT I WOULD BE
THE WOMAN OF HIS DREAMS
THIS PERSON WHO WRITES LIKE THEY’VE SEEN THE WHOLE WORLD
I AM NOT SURE

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

I AM

ELIZABETH

AWKWARD, UNSOCIALIZED

ROBERT

OUT OF MY LEAGUE

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

WILL SHE/HE

ROBERT
LIKE WHAT SHE SEES?

ELIZABETH
(overlapping)
LIKE WHAT HE SEES?

OR IS IT TRUE...

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

WHAT WILL SHE/HE THINK
WHEN SHE/HE SEES ME?
NOT EXACTLY WHAT SHE/HE HOPED I'D BE
I GATHER MYSELF AND STAND TALL

ROBERT
MY HEART IS STIRRING

ELIZABETH
(overlapping)
MY LEGS ARE SHAKING

ROBERT
LIKE I COULD FALL
IN LOVE/
WITH A WOMAN I DON'T KNOW

ELIZABETH
/IT'S TRUE

I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

I AM

ELIZABETH

AWKWARD, UNSOCIALIZED

ROBERT

OUT OF MY LEAGUE

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

WILL SHE/HE

ROBERT

LIKE WHAT SHE SEES?

ELIZABETH

(overlapping)

LIKE WHAT HE SEES?

OR IS IT TRUE...

I AM BETTER ON PAPER
AND SOON HE WILL KNOW

ROBERT

IN THIS LETTER I GAVE HER
I HOPE I CAN SHOW

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE WEATHER
WE COULD BE TOGETHER
IT'S TRUE
I COULD BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU...

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

I AM

ELIZABETH

AWKWARD, UNSOCIALIZED

ADD ROBERT

OUT OF MY LEAGUE

ROBERT & ELIZABETH

WILL SHE/HE

ROBERT
LIKE WHAT SHE/ SEES?

ELIZABETH
(overlapping)
LIKE WHAT HE SEES?

ADD ROBERT
OR IS IT TRUE....

ELIZABETH
I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU

He "arrives" at her home, entering her room. Elizabeth sits, nervously awaiting him. When he enters, her nerves subside, their connection is instant, and their rapport natural.

ELIZABETH
(Shyly)
Hello.

ROBERT
(Confidently)
Hello!
(he cannot stop staring at her and smiling)

ELIZABETH
Why are you smiling?

ROBERT
You're just, nothing like I expected.

ELIZABETH

You're disappointed. I told you not to-

ROBERT

No, no! You're better.

(she smiles)

(beat)

Well, as I said in my letter, I *love* y-

ELIZABETH

(quickly)

-My poetry! Yes!

ROBERT

Well, yes, I do. And I think you and I should-

ELIZABETH

-Be friends!Right?

ROBERT

Uh- If that is what you want, we can be friends then, I suppose. But I would like to keep seeing you. Does every Tuesday work for you?

ELIZABETH

(surprised, getting caught up)

I think I would like that.

(They smile at one another)

Scene 8

Sonnet 2

ELIZABETH

*First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The finger of this hand wherewith I write;
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
Slow to world-greetings, quick with its "Oh, list,"
When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss.
The second passed in height*

*The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O beyond need!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, "My love, my own."*

Scene 9

ROBERT

Elizabeth, I love you from my soul, whether you feel the same way or not. But I can't help but believe you do.

ELIZABETH

Of course I feel the same. But if my father were to find out he would be devastated, and we might never see each other again.

ROBERT

Why won't you let me reason with him? I am after all very charming, aren't I?

ELIZABETH

Yes, you very much are. But, please, I am just not ready yet. I will tell him when I am.

ROBERT

Of course.

Scene 10

Time hop

*Transition.
The suggestion
time has passed.
We see Robert
coming and going.
Many times.*

ELIZABETH

(to the audience)

Winter 1845. I feel as though I've known Robert for a lifetime.

(to Robert)

I never thought that anyone whom *I* could love would stoop to love *me*.
No man was ever before to any woman what you are to me.

ROBERT

Then marry me.

ELIZABETH

What?

ROBERT

My dear Elizabeth, I do kiss your feet, kiss every letter in your name. But this waiting is too much. I want to make a new life with you, this living without you is too tormenting.
(music goes) I would like to have your promise of marriage by this summer's end.

8. "Grow Old With Me"

(singing)

GROW OLD WITH ME
THE BEST IS YET TO COME
I'LL HELP YOU SEE
YOUR LIFE HAS JUST BEGUN

I WANT TO BE WITH YOU
UNTIL THE END OF MY DAYS
BUT THIS WAITING IS TORTURE
I WISH THAT YOU COULD ESCAPE

THIS LIFE
THAT YOU'RE NOT LIVING AT ALL
WILL TRY DESPITE YOUR DESPERATE CALL
TO PUSH YOU AROUND
AND MAKE YOU BELIEVE
THAT YOU CAN'T DO
ALL YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME
THERE'S A NEW LIFE
AND IT'S FINALLY IN SIGHT

GROW OLD WITH ME
THE BEST IS YET TO COME
I'LL HELP YOU SEE
OUR LIFE HAS JUST BEGUN

ELIZABETH

(Reluctantly)

By the summer we will see.

Scene 11

ELIZABETH

(to the audience)

I want nothing more than to never spend another winter apart from Robert, but my father
has forbidden it. *(music start)*

He tells me if I were to marry Robert then I should never bother returning home.

9. “Ever Faithfully Yours, (part 1)”

ELIZABETH

(singing)

IF I DON'T LIVE ANOTHER DAY
WILL I HAVE WASTED MY LIFE AWAY?
WISHING I COULD PLEASE YOU
OBEYING YOUR EVERY RULE
AND NOW I'M LEFT HERE STANDING LIKE A FOOL

I CAN'T SEE MY LIFE WITHOUT HIM
SO WHAT IS MY DELAY
THE FATHER I ONCE LOVED
NOW HAS TAKEN MY LOVE AWAY

I, I CAN'T BREAK FREE THOUGH I TRY
TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU'RE BEING ABSURD
WITH EARS FULL OF SILENCE
SHRIEKING TO BE HEARD

I, I KNOW THAT I MUST DECIDE
BETWEEN THE MAN THAT I FEAR
AND THE MAN THAT I LOVE
I'M SCARED TO CHOOSE HIM
BUT I KNOW I CAN'T LOSE HIM
I'VE LIVED MY LIFE ALL THE SAME
LOOKING OUT A WINDOW
WATCHING SEASONS CHANGE
AND TRYING THE BEST THAT I CAN
TO MEET YOUR EVERY DEMAND
BUT NEVER BEING GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU

I'VE BEEN LIVING IN A NIGHTMARE
SO WHAT IS MY DELAY?
MY FATHER HOLDS ON TIGHTER
SO THAT I CAN'T ESCAPE

I, I CAN'T BREAK FREE THOUGH I TRY
TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU'RE BEING ABSURD
WITH EARS FULL OF SILENCE
SHRIEKING TO BE HEARD

I, I KNOW THAT I MUST DECIDE
BETWEEN THE MAN THAT I FEAR
AND THE MAN THAT I LOVE
I'M SCARED TO CHOOSE HIM
BUT I KNOW I CAN'T LOSE HIM

I TEAR MY LETTER IN TO TWO
MY BRAIN, IT SPLITS, WITH THOUGHTS OF YOU
AND THE LIFE I'D BE LEAVING BEHIND
BUT MY NEW LIFE WITH HIM...
I CAN'T EASE MY MIND

Sonnet 3

(the lights change, we see Elizabeth and the dark figure once again. In dance-like movement they perform the sonnet while Elizabeth recites)

ELIZABETH

*I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove:*

FIGURE

"Guess now who holds thee!"

ELIZABETH

*"Death!" I said. But there,
The silver answer rang:*

FIGURE

"Not Death, but Love."

10. “Ever Faithfully Yours, (part 2)”

(Robert enters, as he walks to her he sings)

ROBERT

GROW OLD WITH ME THE BEST IS YET TO COME
I’LL HELP YOU SEE
OUR LIFE HAS JUST BEGUN

ELIZABETH

IF I DON’T LIVE ANOTHER DAY
AT LEAST THEN I WOULD GET TO SAY
THAT I GOT TO LOVE YOU
AND BE LOVED BY YOU TOO
THAT I WAS GOOD ENOUGH
AND STRONG ENOUGH
TO CHOOSE

I WANT TO BE
I WANT TO BE
EVER FAITHFULLY YOURS

YES I WANT TO BE
I WANT TO BE
EVER FAITHFULLY,
FAITHFULLY YOURS

IT’S STARTING NOW
A BRAND NEW CHAPTER
I’M NOT LOOKING BACK
I’M CHASING AFTER
A FEELING THAT I NEVER KNEW
THAT FOR YOU

ELIZABETH

I AM GOOD ENOUGH

ROBERT

YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH

ELIZABETH

AND STRONG ENOUGH

ROBERT
YOU ARE ENOUGH

ELIZABETH
TO CHOOSE YOU

ROBERT & ELIZABETH
I CHOOSE YOU

I WILL BE
I WILL BE
EVER FAITHFULLY YOURS

YES, I WILL BE
I WILL BE
EVER FAITHFULLY,
FAITHFULLY YOURS

I WILL BE
I WILL BE
EVER FAITHFULLY YOURS,

YES, I WILL BE
I WILL BE
EVER FAITHFULLY,
FAITHFULLY YOURS

They kiss.

ELIZABETH
(to the audience)

Our happiness will blaze out apparent to the whole world, lying in darkness and so die at
the best amidst a universal clapping of hands.

Blackout.

END OF ACT

CHAPTER FOUR

Compositions

Soprano

another place in my mind

$\text{♩} = 100$

5 B^{major}

4

Ev-'ry day a lit-tle talk can hold me, but

7

ev - 'ry day I won - der to my - self.

9

I am at a loss for words I'm burn-ing to en - gage, on the out - side.

11

In my mind I see my- self at mar - ket the

13 $\text{♩} = 54$

town is buzz-ing tear-ing by with life, I take a step and then a breath and

16 16 F^{sharp} D^{sharp}m

I am set in mo-tion, the words, they come out flow-ing and for the

18 G^{sharp}m E D^{sharp}m

first time in my mind I fin - ally feel a - live. My

20 20 F^{sharp} $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ Em

feet, they, don't for- get me as I walk tall and proud-ly in a

24 G^{sharp}m F $\text{♩} = 54$

place where I be- long that's been here all a - long I have V.S.

30 30

spent so much time in the pla-ces in my mind... my mind.....

38 39

I've spent twen-ty two years with my nose in a book my head in the clouds too

42

scared to take a look at the life that's a-round me... and all that I've missed I've

45 **rall.** **A tempo**

ne-ver seen the world; I've ne-ver been... kissed... But with my

47 47

life hang-ing in the bal-ance it's time to take a risk make the most of the mo-ment though the

50 51 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

mo-ment pass-es quick. I am set in mo-tion, the

52

words, they come out flow-ing and for the first time in my life... I fin-ally feel a-live. My

55 55 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

feet, they, don't for-get me as I walk tall and proud-ly in a

59

place where I be-long that's been here all a-long.....

64 64 $\text{♩} = 63$

I know my place as the eld-est in the house: take care of my sis-ters and

67

 make my fa-ther proud my mo-ther grows sick-er by the day hersmile fa-ding thin her

71

 light_ grow-ing dim and I am not too much far be-hind her un-til the

74

 o-pi- um.kicks in takes me a-way from the pain_ and I es-cape a-gain I

79

 lose my - self in my mind

84

 I find my way back in-to my con-science the sun is set-ting and I am still a -

87

 lone I close my book and then my mind A - no-ther day be- hind...

Soprano

hope ends

$\text{♩} = 56$ **3** **colla voce**

Set tled in the air... A change is near I feel... I

look a round and all I see, are all the years be - tween Theroom where I grew up And

what's a head of me... The chance to start o ver And stop li ving in... this make be lieve

Double Time $\text{♩} = 112$

Where does the time go when you're sit - ting, by a win dow? And watch - ing... your child

hood as it... slips a - way... I think of... my mo ther and what... she would say

Where will my life... lead when I start this new ad - ven - ture? I try to be faith

- ful and not lose... my... faith... Wait ting for some thing that might

come... some - day... Writ ten on... these walls... Are th things that I... can't say

V.S.

52
Where does the time__ go when you're sit-ting by a win-dow? And

57
watch-ing__ your child - hood as it__ slips a-way__ I think of__ my mo

62
-ther and what__ she would say__ Andwhere will__ my life__ lead when I

67
start this new ad-ven - ture? I try to be hope - ful and not lose__ my__ faith.

72
__ Wait-ting for some - thing that might__ come some-day__

77
as the pa ges turn to grey And emp ty ing my mind as my

82
colla voce
days.fade a-way__ Where does the time__ go when you're sit-ting by a

88
win-dow? Andwatch-ing__ the co-lors as they__ fade to grey__ Turn-ing__ the pag

94
- es with each__ new-er day__ But hope is - n't end -ing though I'm

99
leav ing it be hind__ And ma king a new life a mong my__ own kind__ No

105
hope is - n't end -ing though I'm leav ing it__ be -hind__ And ma -king__ a new

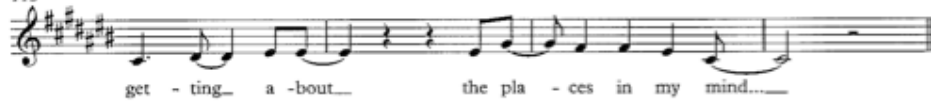
Soprano

3

110 rall.



113



somewhere in london

3

$\text{♩} = 52$ *rall.* $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a tempo of 52 beats per minute and a 'rall.' (rallentando) instruction. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 10, and 14 indicated. The lyrics are: 'I was some-where in Lon-don when I first heard your colla voce', 'verse, and it spoke to me soft-ly and told me to find this per-son who writes like they've', 'seen the whole world with words like the wind stir-ring soft in my heart. I stare, get-ting', and 'lost in your words and sud-den-ly I see my whole life in re - verse'. The piano accompaniment includes various musical notations such as chords, arpeggios, and dynamic markings like 'pp' (pianissimo). The score ends with a double bar line.

I was some-where in Lon-don when I first heard your
colla voce

6
verse, and it spoke to me soft-ly and told me to find this per-son who writes like they've

10
seen the whole world with words like the wind stir-ring soft in my heart. I stare, get-ting

14
lost in your words and sud-den-ly I see my whole life in re - verse

pp

2 **18** Driving ♩ = 72 3. somewhere in london

18 I was raised in the coun-try all too fa

21 mil-lar with wealth. And told who I should be, not al-

23 lowed to choose my-self I re-sent my po-sit-ion in an emp-ty so-ci-e-ty and ad

26 mi-re your dis-po-sit-ion. I wish I saw the world you see. This

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The tempo is marked 'Driving' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number in the left margin (18, 21, 23, 26). The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The piano part features a driving eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. Chord symbols (C/A, D, A, G, A, C/G) are placed above the piano staff. Dynamics include piano (p) and pianissimo (pp). The lyrics are written below the vocal staff, with some words split across lines.

28 **28**

life that I'm not li - ving. at all will try des-pite my

C D⁷/C C E Am⁷ G

31

des - per - ate call To push me a - round and make me be - lieve that

C⁷/A F/A D^{add4}/A F/A C

33

I can't do all I want to a - chieve! But for the first time I can

E E^(add4) E Am

35 **36**

see the light and the words that you write

C/A

p

45 46 somewhere in london 5

when we might meet. This life that I'm not li-ving at all will.

48

try des-pite my des-per-ate call To push me a-round and make me be lieve that

51

I can't do all. I want to a-chieve! But for the first time I can see the light and the words that you

54

write. And the words that you write.

6 rall. 3. somewhere in london

57 **58**

I was some-where in Lon-don when I first heard your verse, and it spoke to me soft ly and

62

told me to find this per-son who writes like they've seen the whole world with words like the wind stir-ring

rall. **67** $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

66 colla voce

soft in my heart. I start, pen to the page a let-ter, the first time I write your name...

the letter

6

$\text{♩} = 124$

3 ROBERT:

Dear Ms. Bar-rett, I must be terse; I

5

read your work and I love your verse. And for-give me for be-ing so out of blue

8

12

but hon-est-ly__ dear__ I am in love with you

p

2

6. the letter

ELIZABETH:

13

Could this be what I

17

need to move on from my grief? Does he mean what he

21

says when he says he loves me? He told me a story of a

24

25

time in the past when he and John Can-yon came walk-ing past Hestopped at my street and

6. the letter

poco accel. . . . 3

29

stared at my win-dow, long-ing to see me by the can-dle glow But re-treat-ing so quick-ly, the

33

fear of re-ject-ion. Can this be real life? Does he want a con-nect-ion? He asked in his let-ter

37

if we could meet, say-ing his side would be bet-ter at his view from the street.....

41

Could this be what I

4 6. the letter

45

need to move on from my grief? Does he mean what he

49 rit. 52

says when he says he loves me...? I start,

53

pen to the page. A let-ter, but I don't know what to say...

Voice

ever faithfully yours, pt. 1

$\text{♩} = 150$

7

If I don't live a - no-ther day will I have was - ted my life a-way

13

wish-ing I could please you; o - bey-ing your ev-ery and now I'm left here stand-ing like a

19

2

fool. I can't see my life with-out him so what is my de-

26

lay? The fat - ther I once loved now has ta-ken my love a - way

31

3 3 3

I... I can't break free though I try

38

to make you un-der - stand that you're be - ing ab-surd with ears full of si-

44

3 3 3

- lence shriek-ing to be heard I... I know that I must de-

51

cide be-tween the man that I fear and the

57

man that I love I'm scared to choose him but I know I can't lose him

63

7

70
I've lived my life all the same; look-ing out a win-dow watch-ing sea-sons change and

75
try-ing the best that I can to meet your ev-ery de-mand and ne-ver be-ing good e-nough for you

82
I've been li-ving in a night-mare so what is my de-lay my fa-ther holds on tight-er so that

89
I can't es-cape. L... I can't break free though I try...

98
to make you un-der-stand... that you're be-ing ab-surd with

105
ears full of si-lence shriek-ing... to be heard... And L...

112
I know that I must de-cide... be-tween the man that I fear... and the

119
man... that I love... I'm scared to choose... him but I know I can't lose him... I tear my life

126
in-to two my brain it splits thoughts of you and the life I'd be leav-ing be-

130
hind and my new life with him I can't ease my mind...

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