

# On hearing my young student in Britten's parable opera Curlew River

by [Sue Ellen Kuzma](#) in the [August 21, 2007](#) issue

Somewhere in the sacred opera,  
in a sea of men, the little voice,  
fearless in the face  
of the foreign marketplace of sound  
booming in the maw of the basilica,  
came forth, the little voice,  
like the water bird above the river.

The lost child's chant, meant to take away  
a mother's grief, came at us  
from behind.

His form, white, diaphanous, backlit,  
wafted from the narthex down the nave,  
one flaming wing trembling,  
his treble sure, sure, soaring,  
pinning my lapsed heart  
to some small certainty:

All shall be well.  
The ears of the deaf  
shall be open, as well  
as the gates  
to the house of doubt.