

Inscribed on a Lintel

for soprano and piano

Sid Richardson
(2022)

Inscribed on a Lintel

Instrumentation

Soprano
Piano

Duration

ca. 4 minutes

Texts

"Inscribed on a Lintel"

I was born beside a quarry. I played in granite
spray and gravel, dust up to my elbows.

I was born beside the ocean. I played in the tide,
at night I sucked my arm to get the salt out.

I was born beside a mountain. I played under
evergreens. At night my life seemed haunted.

I lived beside a quarry, I worked deep in the earth,
I made my body a drill to burrow into stone.

I lived beside the ocean, I worked inside the water,
I made my body a net and I cast myself wide.

I lived beside a mountain, I worked inside the wood,
I made my body a saw and I cleared a field.

All my life when I worked, I disappeared inside
my work; so when my work ended, I disappeared.

by Dan Chiasson from *Natural History* (2000)

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Program Note

This song was written for a musical memorial service in honor of long-time music program manager at Wellesley College, Mag Christian. For inspiration I turned to a Wellesley poet, Dan Chiasson, whose evocative poem "Inscribed on a Lintel" beautifully summed up how Mag gave her absolute all for the Wellesley music community. She was working from her hospital bed until mere days before she passed away. Musically, my song is structured in two main parts. In the first half, the singer extolls where she was born and where she comes from. The accompaniment becomes more steadily rhythmic as the singer recounts her life's work in the second half. Ultimately, the poem's protagonist "disappears" after her work is done, just as Mag suddenly did from our lives.

Inscribed on a Lintel

In Memoriam Magdalen Christian

Dan Chiasson

Sid Richardson

♩ = 69 - 72 Misterioso

mf

Soprano

I was born be-side a quar ry. I

Piano

f *mf* *p*

Red. 8^{vb}

4

S.

played in gran-ite spray and grav-el dust up to my

Pno.

mf *f* *p sotto voce*

mp *p* *pp*

secco

f *mp*

poco rit.

♩ = 63 Poco meno mosso

7

S.

el-bows. I was born be - side the o - cean

Pno.

mp *mf exuberant*

p rubato *pp* *p*

10 *mf scherzando*

S. I played I played I played in the tide

Pno. *p flowing* *mp* *pp rubato*

13 *p* *mf* *f* *mp*

S. in the tide in the tide

Pno. *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

15 *senza vib.* *p haunting* *f* *> mf* *con vib.*

S. at night I sucked my arm to get the salt out. I was

Pno. *f secco* *sfz* *pp* *ppp*

19 *f*

S. born be-side a moun-tain I played I played I played un-der

Pno. *p* *flowing*