

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.