

ing to his last two main chapters, that Smith's visionary experiences were more subjective than tradition claims. This conclusion leads him to speculate about the theological content of a post-critical Mormonism. He calls for an emphasis on following and worshipping Jesus. He is not suggesting giving up all the unique doctrines of Mormonism. For example, he finds great value in the plan of salvation and eternal marriage (261), believes that the Book of Mormon is valuable in bringing people to Christ (133), and envisions the continued use of the sacrament prayers (part of the Book of Mormon text) and their value for Christian covenant (262).

My main concern as a historian is that such a revisioning not involve a retreat to biblical fundamentalism. A person could write—indeed, scholars have written—the same sort of book about the New and Old Testaments that Palmer has written about Smith's scriptures. Instead of peeling layers off the onion to focus on the imagined true core of belief, it might be better (at least concomitantly) to adopt a more humanistic estimate of all religion and religious texts. One may be less certain about doctrine in this case, but one would be better able to appreciate and critique the contributions that all humans have made to the understanding of the world, whether they be mythical, artistic, scholarly, or scientific.¹³

Singing the Differences to Sleep

Heidi Hart, *Grace Notes: The Waking of a Woman's Voice* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 227 pp.

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A grace note is a musical term for a miniature note placed before a prominent note in a musical phrase. If music is the direct line to human emotion, as Heidi Hart claims in her book, the grace note serves as a light, decorative touch of illumination. It implies interaction with and whispers of grace.

A quotation from Mechtild of Magdeburg sets the stage for this inquiry into the waking of a woman's voice: "I have learned to fear more the judgment of God should I, God's small creature, keep silent" (210).

The waking of Hart's voice in particular begins with a trip to the Connecticut State Library where she sought a journal of Catharine Seely—a cousin of her great-great-great-great grandfather. Catharine became a Quaker at nineteen in a

13. See Mark Thomas, moderator, "Scripture, History, and Faith: A Round Table Discussion," *Dialogue* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 89–117.

state that was once so hostile to the Friends that "17th century policy threatened members with hot irons on the tongue" (3). While Catharine sat in silence among the Friends and made the effort "to become 'tender' to spiritual experience without ritual or creed," her cousin joined the LDS Church. Hence, the eventual creation of Heidi Hart, the author of *Grace Notes*, an offshoot of the branching family tree filled with Seelys, Weeds, Scofields, Mormons, Quakers, and even a yodeling cowboy.

Hart comes from a long line of devout Mormons including college deans and Church authorities (the "Mormon aristocracy") whom she discreetly references but doesn't name. For those who are acquainted, it's easy to recognize David O. McKay as the white-haired brother of her great-grandmother who grew up in Huntsville, Utah. It's not a far reach when she speaks of her grandmother who conducted tours through the Old Home in that community. Her grandfather served in the Second Quorum of the Seventies (she imagined him letting the "Mormon hierarchy absorb him into its granite walls," 117), and her father also worked as an attorney for the Church. Heidi was often advised to live up to this family name, to behave appropriately, and to give service in the highly structured LDS beehive. Hart had a pressing need to find her own clarity, her own voice in this long string of ancestral voices claiming that they knew this Church to be the only true Church.

The book is written in six chapters divided into the same-titled sections in each chapter (diary, nine openings, chant, *passaggio*, conversation, and silence). Hart, who is a classical vocalist, a poet, and a seeker, reveals the many paths she's traveled to find her speaking and singing voice, to reclaim her own body that she often felt belonged more to the Church than to herself, to find the oneness rather than the disparateness in the world.

Told all of her life to "marry a worthy young man, start a family, and fulfill her 'divine role,'" she felt this intense desire to breathe, to not be "buried alive in my already ended story" (79). A deeply spiritual poet, mystic, and singer of songs that aim to pierce the heart of the Divine, Hart told herself, "there must be a way to have a rich spiritual life without being fed all the answers and told exactly how to live. But something in me held back, afraid" (26).

Hart descended from a long line of women with delicate constitutions. Catharine Seely was diagnosed with scrofula—a tuberculosis of the lymph nodes and throat. Her maternal grandmother was homebound with arthritis for forty years. Her own mother had frequent bouts with laryngitis and colitis, leading Hart to comment: "My mother's body was a diary of shame and fear. . . . She'd kept rage wound in her belly like a parasite" (163). Hart didn't want to choose this withering-lily response to life. Though she herself often stayed home from school in the "dim light of the sickroom where she read Bronte novels" (59), illness and con-

finement began to represent the loss of voice and the inward turning away from being fully alive.

Yearning to break free from the delicate-constitution syndrome, from the legacy of appropriate behavior—"I was learning to smother myself in layers of niceness" (121)—and from the religious platitudes she heard as explanations at church, she took her first steps into the labyrinth. Through a series of encounters, she found mirrors to reflect herself to herself, mirrors that helped her see surprising pieces of Heidi Hart that she believed had been imprisoned and silenced.

Friendship was the first step. A friend in Gardnerville, Nevada, taught her to play the organ and to hear its "giant breathing," its chuff, which was the sound of opening pipes. Another woman friend in Connecticut turned her gaze toward Hart and gave her the gift of recognizing the woman behind the face, the woman who no longer believed anyone could know the perimeters of her heart.

The eyes of other cultures became another step. Hart traveled to reservations as a child where she saw Zuni *kachinas* dancing on a giant mural of an Indian chapel and heard the sounds of the native drums that seemed to be the heartbeat of the earth. She danced with abandon in an African American dance class where she felt the same pulse. She studied the Tibetan Buddhist practice of *tonglen* and learned to breathe in despair and exhale it as hope. She joined a gathering of "Jewish hippie chicks" and listened to them speaking of Shechinah (divine presence)—"our job as humans is to gather the pieces scattered throughout the earth like broken glass" (125). She also read Meister Eckhart: "God is nearer to me than I am to myself. . . . God is within; we are without. God is at home; we are abroad" (90).

Her own singing voice was yet another step, the search for the "soul voice buried in her chest" that wasn't being heard. This voice was different from the one she'd used to sing in musicals with her mother who often took the leading role at the Promised Valley Playhouse. It also differed from the singing voice she'd developed over the years with different vocal coaches. Hart felt as though she was "singing from inside a cocoon" (43).

When she entered graduate school at Sarah Lawrence where she enrolled to study poetry, not voice, she registered for a generic elective called "Words and Music" and was informed by the Music Department that this class required her to take private lessons as well. She interviewed every member of the vocal faculty to find tenor Thomas Young. "No other teacher would do" (44). At her first lesson, he asked her, "What would happen if you actually inhabited your body?" That was a question she hadn't considered. "Sing to express, not to impress," he continued. "When you sing you reveal." He quoted Miles Davis, jazz trumpeter: "It takes a lifetime to sound like yourself" (46).

In addition to these guides in her journey, Hart felt more and more drawn to the Quaker way of seeing, to the concept of the Inward Light of each person, to