

# A Song That Reconnects

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by Allie Picketts

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Recorded by author

It was the end of December and I was walking downtown, trying to keep my fingers from going numb while attempting to locate Burning Rainbow Studio on ləkʷəŋən territory, Vancouver Island. Just as I was beginning to wonder if I had misjudged what block I should be on, I saw a woman with pink hair and a rolling cello case approaching from the opposite direction: I must be in the right place. I had never met Amy Houston before, but her composed-on-the-spot cello track was about to become an essential part of my first professionally recorded song.

Going through Frieda's course wound up breaking my mind and heart open to the depth of support that this work can offer.

The lyrics for "Widening" had come to me the previous summer, while I was in the midst of a five-week online Work That Reconnects workshop series facilitated by Frieda Nixdorf. I had just discovered the work of Joanna Macy that spring, and I was so inspired that I had quickly enrolled in the Spiral Journey WTR Facilitator Development Program that was to begin in the fall. But I hadn't yet been through a proper Full Spiral myself, and it was one of the prerequisites. Going through Frieda's course wound up breaking my mind and heart open to the depth of support that this work can offer. I was immensely grateful to be (re)connecting so deeply: both with the other participants, who were spread around the world (thank you ZOOM), and with the material.

My pain was so ready to be metabolized, and the way it was reformed to be shared with the world was via... music and poetry.

During those slower hours of summer I was also spending even more than my usual amount of time in my two favourite places: in the woods and at the piano. And one July evening, this song appeared. My retrospective vision of its birth is set mostly in the tiny town of Sayward on the northern half of the island, where I went camping soon after the tune and the harmonies first came to me. Clearly I couldn't take my piano camping with me, but out on the Salmon River and in the woods and meadows of Sayward, while I read my Spiral Journey course textbooks and did my prerequisite work in the dappled shade, and went paddleboarding in the shadow of H'kusam, and slept outdoors, and took time to contemplate things, and cried, and tended my grief for the Earth – that's where the lyrics and melody solidified themselves and the song as a whole gained its shape and flavour.

My pain was so ready to be metabolized, and the way it was reformed to be shared with the world was via the languages that come most naturally to me: music and poetry.

The words of Joanna Macy and various WTR terms come up in the song's lyrics, including the concept of Breathing Through, a meditation which has particularly supported me in dealing with my pain for the world. You'll also hear echoes of a heart holding the whole world's pain inside, widening circles, going forth, and a song singing itself through us.

I had never worked in a professional recording studio before, and I'm not a trained singer, but somehow this song kept poking me, telling me it needed to be done. And by the end of the year, the song and I both felt ready. I booked my date and brought some windchimes along for good measure. Amy was willing to tune her C string down to a B-flat for the final amazing cello note, and the universe conspired to get my favourite birdsong in there, too: the recording technician had a hobby of recording birds in nature, and he just happened to have the perfect Swainson's thrush call, backed by a bubbling creek, on his computer.

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Before and since recording "Widening", I have been happily busy discovering how much music and poetry there is that supports or is based on the Spiral, and I'm so thankful for all of it. I feel deeply how much I need the aural arts to support me in this work, as in life in general. I haven't studied sound healing or music therapy in the usual senses of those terms, but the enormous power of sound has been an inescapable part of my own life and learning. Sound can be overstimulating or painful or trauma-inducing or harmful, such as with tinnitus, technological beeps and dings, high decibel levels causing hearing damage, the emotional and physiological effects of yelling or screaming, misophonia and other sound sensitivities, or human-created sounds that disrupt the health of other forms of life. Sound can also heal: I'm thinking of music, chimes, animal sounds and birdsong, kind words, laughter, or Earth's sounds, such as rain, waves, wind, and so on.

This song is meant to be shared and bathed in. I hope it will be like a healing soundscape to help move the pain through. Please share, sing (lyrics below), play, cover or use "Widening" in workshops or in any capacity you like.

## Widening

there is a heart that hears the words  
 our Mother speaks through sea and birds and crickets in the dusk  
 and chimes in the rain  
 there is a heart of Earth and I'm  
 ready to slow down and take the time  
 to ground again

ground again  
listening, we're listening  
listening

there is a heart that, opened wide,  
can hold the whole world's pain inside, and it's yours  
and mine  
there is a heart, don't be afraid,  
go forth along the path your grief has made  
through wind and fire  
wind and fire  
breathe in, and through  
breathe in, and through

there is a song that wants to sing  
itself through us, what power it can bring  
we are ready  
there is a song that reconnects  
across all lands and dialects and the superficial  
differences we see  
now we see  
widening, it's widening  
widening

Bandcamp: <https://alliepicketts.bandcamp.com/track/widening-with-amy-houston>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/49BLVuPXzZd9S8u5HjIJvy>

Apple Music: <https://music.apple.com/us/album/widening-feat-amy-houston/1682947870?i=1682>

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**Allie Picketts** (she/her) is a musician, writer, parent, editor, piano teacher, Work That Reconnects facilitator, and lover of nature. She was born and raised on the unceded lands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy̓əm (Musqueam), scəw̓aθən (Tsawwassen), and other Coast Salish Peoples, and is thankful to live within T'Sou-ke traditional territory on Vancouver Island, Canada. She can be found at [www.alliepickettswrites.com](http://www.alliepickettswrites.com)



Photo by Marc Geuzinge