

# The Sound of People Learning to Make Music

I've sung at the Capitol only once, so far,  
and the day that I did, they chose to sing  
Amazing Grace. Somehow, our circle  
started off in two different keys,  
and even more surprising—or maybe not—  
we persisted in that difference to the end,  
the mingled atonality creating its own  
earthly unearthly human music, lifting  
up into the dome, to be replicated exactly never.

Some laughed it off, others got out the pitch pipe,  
but the sound of people learning to make music  
has never bothered me, maybe because  
I grew up in a music-filled house, and we  
were always honking, squeaking, strumming  
and pounding, trying our hands and breath in new  
combinations, beginning again.

So it doesn't bother me now, when my son  
pulls out his viola, or my daughter her ukulele,  
the warm-ups and scales, rehearsal and process, tents  
and manifestoes, are all just part  
of the open-ended art of getting it wrong  
in order to get it right, somewhere in this  
not quite aimless, not quite tuneless wandering.

—Sarah Busse

**Sarah Busse** is one of the Poets Laureate of Madison. The author of two chapbooks, her first full-length collection, *Somewhere Piano*, will be published by Mayapple Press in the fall of 2012. With her husband and two children, she has lived in Madison for six and a half years on the far west side.

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