

Transcript of video description of “Pretty Bird” by Abigail Washburn

The last song is called Pretty Bird. This is a song by a musical hero of mine named Hazel Dickens, who is from West Virginia, Mercer County West Virginia. She was one of eleven kids. All of her brothers and father were coal miners. She became a very strong voice, she lifted her voice and shared songs she wrote inspired by some other real pioneers, even older than her that were doing hard work in the mountains. She carried the torch to try and help non-unionized coal miners to still be treated with a certain amount of respect for their human rights. She also believed in women's rights. This is a song that I wish she was here so I could ask her about...but when I hear the song pretty bird I think of it as a sort of sadness about the way women can be held back. Have been held back in their beauty, their skills, their talents, and what they have to offer. She has this hope that women can fly free and give their greatness to the world. That's what I hear when I sing it and that is what I channel. I remember learning one time that it was about a sister or a cousin or someone close to her that she thought was in an abusive relationship and wanted them to get out, or just saw what it was and was sad about it. I love the way Fei plays accompaniment to it, we improvised it on the spot in the studio without coming up with a plan for it. I am really, really proud with what we came up with at the last moment.

Washburn, A. (2020, July 25). *Description of Pretty Bird* [Transcript]. Retrieved from World View Global Music Fellows LiveBinder.