

The question I get the most about being adopted is “What is it like?” and while someone who is not adopted will ever truly understand, I think many can empathize more than they think. We all experience loss, grief, rejection, abandonment, trust and control issues, conflicts with loyalty and family, identity issues, feeling like we don’t belong. They are inherent to the human experience. These issues pervade the lives of each member in the adoption constellation (adoptive and biological parents and the adoptee) in very specific ways within the context of adoption.

This is how Homeward Bound came to life

The incredible artist Michael Talbot challenged me to this “fragility” challenge in the summer of 2020. The Fragility Series is an international exhibition series showcased simultaneously around the globe, with each location headed by different artists (in Boston, Jamaica and the UK). I bought a piece called Longevity from the third part of the Fragility series in 2019. After receiving a failed search notification from Holt, my senior recital cancelled, and all of us in lockdown, I felt so fragile.

Michael’s challenge was to create something with fragility in mind. I wrote 3 songs (all of which are in the album in some way shape or form), recorded them with the help of my longtime friend and collaborator Brian Sardinha and released them (they are no longer on streaming platforms, as I am re-releasing them)

I served as Interim Music Director of a congregation called The Crossing at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul in Boston from 2022-2023, and the theme for worship and liturgy that ministry year was framed around the theme “Home.” My cross-genre journey began there, as I was singing songs about home whether they were sacred or secular, classical or classic rock. Now I have an abundance of songs I know about home, but that year really had me examine where home is. I shared reflections on the Gospel (many of which you will hear in the show) and created spiritual practices to help us reflect upon our relationship with ourselves, our literal and figurative homes. And as I reflected upon my brokenness as we gazed at ourselves in fractured mirrors, likened our names to doors on a house, and looked out to find the sacred not just in cathedrals, but in the secular world, I recognized that my whole life I was trying to find home in everything else, except myself.

How could I not? When the mother who carried me for 9 months abandoned me, I learned from my first experience in life- to abandon myself as I had been abandoned.

When I moved to New York, I began performing in open mics with an amazing organization Keepsake house. It is through these open mics that I performed and developed the material that has become this show. Keepsake House became a home for me, as the fellow creatives I met there are people who today, I consider to be like family. As I struggled with shame and self love, I examined the self abandonment that would echo the abandonment of my biological parents.

As I told some people about the show's concept, I was often asked if I hated myself. I was out of practice since graduating in 2020, learning a whole new genre of singing. The strenuous labor of self producing a solo show combined with the technical rigor and stamina the classical repertoire alone would require, not to mention the cross genre performance of my debut album that I am simultaneously writing and recording during the show's fundraising preparation and promotion all while working multiple jobs and enrolled in a part time Masters program is absolutely insane. I hated myself so much, I felt I needed to do all of this to prove my worth- and if I was worth something maybe, I could earn everyone's love. So yes, I did hate myself. The critical voice inside me paralyzed me for so long, I told myself that this would be my last musical endeavor.

I told myself that getting sober, and working on myself was just for this project, I learned to make a home within myself, clearing out the shame and rebuilding the foundation.

It was slow uncomfortable work, confronting myself honestly with all my shortcomings and fears, but it was harder staying in the shame.

In preparing this show, I adopted a whole new way of living, and transformed into a version of myself that is still the person you all know, but more genuine, at peace, and most of all, at home with myself.

The views I hold about the role Christianity has played in adoption do not reflect my whole experience working in Christian ministry. My opinions criticize the narratives in Christianity perpetuating the systemic human rights violations and issues in the adoption industry, and do not reflect upon the many wonderful individuals and communities who I have met in spaces of faith who have supported and uplifted me. It is because of my many positive experiences that I have the strength to speak up about the negative experiences I have had, so we can ensure no matter what faith or creed (or lack thereof) one has, we all have a voice to speak our truth and be heard.

In this show, I share my childhood experiences with my parents, and while these accounts are true to my memory, I would have to write a whole other show to express how amazing they are.

No person and therefore no parent is perfect, but my parents have always taken it upon themselves to grow and change out of love to support their children. The love I have for them and my whole family is boundless and eternal.

I am asked if I would change anything about my adoption.

While I strive to change the systems that tear families apart, shed light on adoption corruption, bring awareness about mental health issues caused by adoption trauma, and reclaim the narrative, I would not change a single thing.

Because if I changed anything, I wouldn't have my siblings.

Jamie, Joey, Joy and John, I love you all so much no matter what.

You all deserve the world, and
I will stop at nothing to get it for you.