

*Reflection***I Am Still Alive****Amy Clements-Cortés¹**¹*University of Toronto, Faculty of Music; Ryerson Chang School, Toronto, Canada***I Am Still Alive***I am still alive.*

Since I have come here I have not left this room.

I am restless, angry and weak

I want to get stronger so I can spend time with my daughters and grandchildren

*I am still alive.**I am still alive.*I feel alone even though I am surrounded by people
Music makes me feel alive and I want to sing louder
and louder so everyone will hear meMusic helps me to remember, but it sometimes
makes others cry*I am still alive.**I am still alive.*“Crying is good for you child”, I cried too when my
Mother died.Let’s sing together for you are as beautiful as the
moonlight to me

Music makes me feel more at peace.

*I am still alive.***Context:**

I am still alive is a poem based on the true story of an Orthodox Jewish woman “Beata” who was dying of end stage cancer that had metastasized. She was in palliative care when I met her, and she struggled with the fact that her family and healthcare professionals treated her as if she was already dead. While she shared that she was always a soft spoken person, she did not want to “fade into the background” on her “deathbed”. She requested to hear the Hebrew folksong “Chai”, which talks about being alive and she would sing it loudly with me while playing small percussion instruments. We discussed how music brought out many emotions in people and how it often caused her daughter to cry when she attended music therapy sessions. There were meaningful moments in those sessions with her daughter present as Beata requested songs such as “My Yiddishe Mamma”, to open a conversation with her daughter about how difficult it was when her mother died. Beata and I also offered song dedications to her daughter. One favourite of Beata’s to offer was “Shein Vi D’Lvone”, which translates as You are as beautiful as the moonlight.

This poem is a reflection of Beata’s comments and belief in the support of music to feel alive in her last days.

Biographical Statements

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