

*Visits to St. Elizabeth's* is a setting for voice and piano of Elizabeth Bishop's poem of that name. Ms. Bishop, one of Vassar College's most distinguished alumnae, served as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress during the period that Ezra Pound was incarcerated in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. Although she had mixed feelings about him and his behavior during W.W.II, she respected the poet and visited him several times. The result was her variation on the children's poem, "This is the house that Jack built." When I was accompanist of the Harvard Glee Club, long before I joined the Vassar faculty, we performed in Washington and I stayed with the director of St. Elizabeth's, a Harvard alumnus named Winifred Overholser, who had known Pound and had many interesting things to say about him. This odd coincidence eventually drew me to Bishop's poem.

*Visits to St Elizabeth's* was given its premiere by Mary Nessinger, mezzo-soprano, and Richard Wilson, piano, on October 2, 2005 in Merkin Concert Hall, New York City.

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