ARE YOU LISTENING?
Hanna Eyre

‘Are You Listening?’ was inspired by the stories of two men I met while busking, Lucas and Herbert. Both are currently homeless.

‘91 or ‘92 left me smaller than the world
I could fit between my hands
Only 5 years old, but old enough to know
What it means when no one cares or understands
No one cares where you land

I’ve planted my feet into the streets of Dallas,
Tuscan, Portland, but I was never one for roots
My second mama loves me, but yeah, she taught me
That this world will never ask before it shoots
Yeah and no one’s got a clue
Well tell me, how ‘bout you?

CHORUS

Would you see me? Would you run?
Well you’re not the only one
Seems like everyone I meet
Sets a fire at my feet
Would you fight a broken man
Doing everything he can?
Tell me, dear, you’re standing here
But are you listening?
Are you listening?

Another shallow day, always a game to play
Just chase the screams away
As my sister’s crying to the wind
Watching my shadow fade, always a price to pay
Forgive the father, for he has sinned
No one wins
Well tell me like it is

CHORUS

Where does all of this go?
Act like you know
Truth is, you’re just as scared
As all of us
We all got it rough
But I’m not nearly through
Tell me how ‘bout you?

VERSE 1:

Lucas was 5 years old when he was taken from his family (around 1991 or 1992) and placed in the Witness Protection Program as they validated his story. He would stay in the office every day, but wasn’t provided a place to stay at night, so he would spend the nights at shelters or on the streets with other homeless individuals.

Herbert has been homeless across the states (including Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Tuscan, AZ; Portland, OR), but he was born and raised in Provo and is a member of the church. He said that Provo is in his opinion “the safest place in the world to be homeless”.

Herbert has two mothers: “I got a biological mama that don’t love me, and a foster mama that loves me to death.” His ‘second mother’ is his foster mother.

CHORUS:
The chorus was inspired by a conversation between Lucas and Herbert who know each other fairly well. They were discussing the culture of religion surrounding homelessness. Herbert said, referring to Lucas, that if he saw him on the street, he’d avoid walking by him and interacting with him and that other Christians would probably do the same. However, now knowing Lucas, he said that he was one of the kindest people he knew.

The line ‘Are you listening?’ came from one of the men who asked me as I was recording our conversation, “Well I know you’re recording, but are you listening?”

VERSE 2:

Lucas was taken from his family because at that young age, he witnessed his father raping his sister. He was taken into Witness Protection to collect and validate his story; he was told it was hard to consider his experience ‘evidence’ because of his young age.