

Revisiting the Teddy Bears  
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An email to my nineteen-year-old daughter Dee.

Dee,

Back in 1958, a song called “To Know Him Is to Love Him” by a group called the Teddy Bears was a huge hit. It was a couple of boys just out of a Los Angeles high school and a girl still in that high school, high school friends. They weren’t professional musicians. They paid \$75 dollars to record the song. The song and the lyrics were mocked by people in the know back then as simple and sappy, but my take after listening to a YouTube of it last night is that the melody had an understated distinction and the lyrics tap into basic, fundamental realities of the love of a woman for a man (“I’ll be good to him. I’ll make love to him. Everyone says there’ll come a day when I’ll walk alongside of him. To know, know, know him is to love, love, love him, and I do.”). The lead singer’s name I know now was Annette Kleinbard and the guitar player wrote the song and recruited Annette and the other singer and set up the recording. It was the Teddy Bears only hit song,

I was your age back then and bought the record (79 cents) and played it over and over on a little phonograph that probably cost \$15. It was a touching experience for me last night to see the group and hear the song again after 66 years. This YouTube is from the television show of a singer named Perry Como that I watched every week. At the same time I’m the person picking out clothes at ECCO [a clothing store] with you, I’m the teenager who listened to “To Know Him Is to Love Him” by the Teddy Bears, you know what I’m getting at? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sV718cKqJLw>

Love you,

Dad