

Ambios guided walk: Words and music

For a New Beginning – John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

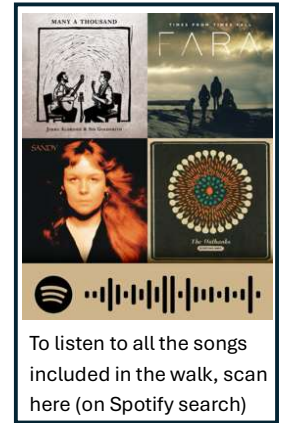
For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.



Love gathers all – Edwin Muir (Arr. Fara)

Sunset ends the day,
The years shift their place,
Under the Sun's sway
Times from times fall;
Mind fighting mind
The secret chords unwind
No power can replace:
Love gathers all.

The living and the dead
Centuries separate
Man from himself is led
Through mazes past recall,
Distraction can disguise
The wastrel and the wise
Til neither knows his state:
Love gathers all.

Father at odds with son
Breeds ageless enmity,
Friendships undone
Build up a topless wall;
Achilles and Hector slain
Fight, fight and fight again
In measureless memory:
Love gathers all.

The quarrel from the start,
Long past and never past,
The war of mind and heart,
The Great War and the small
That tumbles the hovel down
and topples town on town
Come to one place at last:
Love gathers all.

June – Mary Oliver

A single swallow glides in the air above the water. Next to it something hovers, thin and white. It flies too– or is it floating? It vanishes. It appears again, a little smaller than the bird.

Now the bird approaches land. Now it is over the beach itself. The floating object is also over the beach. A feather!

The swallow snaps the feather from the air and holds it in its beak while it takes three or four rapid strokes forward. Then it lets the feather go, and dives away.

The feather pauses on the updraft, then begins to descend. The bird turns, flows back, glides above and beneath it. The feather tumbles erratically. With a plunge the swallow snaps it from the air and flies on, and then, again, lets it go.

All of this is repeated maybe a dozen times. Finally the swallow ignores the feather, which drifts towards the berms of wild roses, between the dunes and the sea. The swallow climbs higher into the air, blue shoulders pumping hard. Then it swings, glides, turns towards the sea, is gone.

Extract from *Singing Like Larks* – Andrew Millham

We are the "folk" in "folk song" - the songs belong to us all. They are us. They chronicle the history of people and places, and we are incredibly fortunate to inherit a vast stock of timeless lyrics and melodies from our ancestors. Whilst we are here, our role is to cherish them, learn from them, put our own creative spin on them, and deliver them on to their next custodians. And yet, the unfortunate truth is that this living musical tradition is dwindling - in danger of disappearing, even.

Ornithological folk songs are a threatened species - out of place in today's fast-paced technological world. The majority of traditional songs are no longer passed on, very rarely sung and instead buried in the yellowing pages of dusty ballad books in silent libraries. The people that created and learnt these songs looked to the skies, to themselves and to one another for entertainment - no smartphones, no PlayStations. Birds were a major part of life. Rising early and retiring late, these people's days were serenaded with birdsong, and so they sang about it. Today, our lives are seemingly too busy to watch the birds, our days too jam-packed to sing a 'boring' old song. Never have we been more connected with each other, yet so disconnected from nature and wildlife.

Birds surround us. Low and high; land and sky; pylon and pavement; mountain and moor. They soundtrack our lives with their rattling, chirruping, whistling songs, and feature in so many of our own. We are often compelled to sing about what we love, and folk songs showcase just what birds mean to us - even if we sometimes forget.

My Singing Bird – trad. (Arr. The Unthanks)

I have heard the lark soar high at morn.

Heard his song up in the blue.

I have heard the blackbird pipe his note,

The thrush and the linnet too.

But, there's none of them can sing so sweet

My singing bird as you.

Ah, my singing bird as you.

If I could lure my singing bird

From his own cosy nest,

If I could catch my singing bird

I would warm him on my breast.

But, there's none of them can sing so sweet

My singing bird as you.

Ah, my singing bird as you.

The Seasons – Joseph Campell (Arr. Jimmy Aldridge & Sid Goldsmith)

I will go with my father a-ploughing
To the green field by the sea
And the crows and the rooks and the seagulls
Will come flocking after me.

I will see the patient horses
And the lark in the clear air
And my father will sing the plough song
That rejoices in the cleaving share.

I will go with my father a-sowing
To the red field by the sea.
And the crows and the rooks and the starlings
Will come flocking after me.

I will see the striding sower
and the finch on wings so low
And my father will sing the seed song
That only the wise men know.

I will go with my father a-reaping
To the gold field by the sea.
And the crows and the rooks and the children
Will come flocking after me.

I will see the tan faced reaper
and the wren in the heat of the sun
and my father will sing the scythe song
that rejoices in the harvest home.

I will go with my father a-threshing
To the barn set by the sea
And the crows and the rooks and the sparrows
Will come flocking after me
I will sing to the labouring thresher
as his flail swings over his head
and my father will sing the flail song
that rejoices in wheat for the bread.

The Quiet Joys of Brotherhood – (Arr. Sandy Denny, additional verse by Ellie Beare)

As gentle tides go rolling by,
along the salt sea strand
The colours blend and roll as one
together in the sand.
And often do the winds entwine
Do send their distant call,
the quiet joys of brotherhood.
And love is lord of all.

The oak and weed together rise,
along the common ground.
The mare and stallion, light and dark
Have thunder in their sound.
The rainbow sign, the blended flower
Still have my heart in thrall.
The quiet joys of brotherhood,
And love is lord of all.

But man has come to plough the tide,
The oak lies on the ground.
I hear their fires in the fields,
They drive the stallion down.
The roses bleed both light and dark,
The winds do seldom call.
The running sands recall the time
When love was lord of all.

We woke from sleep, we heard the call -
A tremor rumbling underground.
And as we rose, the murmur grew
Into a deafening wall of sound.
Destruction rode with steady pace,
The world seemed primed to fall.
But there was hope, however small,
For love is lord of all.

Rewilding in the only way you know how – Emma Plover

Listening to your body

listening when the wind calls your name
and the trees reach out for you

Returning your earthly body to the land it needs
the plants have missed you all this time
calling your name ever since you left

The trees knew you had to leave
and you'd return once you were ready

And now you're back with eyes wide open
open to the things you can't see

It's clear knowing in an ancient language
language you can't speak but understand
now you're part of an ancient practice
an ancient practice upon the land

You know it deep inside your body
you're not even sure how
but inside you carry wisdom
ancient wisdom from the land

And you're gradually (re)wilding
learning slowly what you once knew
the old ways might be gone for now
but they're rewilding slowly inside you

I am part of an ancient practice
practiced by those who came before
the practice of hearing and seeing
clear knowing upon the land.

Wild Geese – Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Mother of the water – Alexa Sunshine Rose

Mother of the water
Mother of us all
Dreams and new beginnings
Streams and waterfalls

Mother of the Water
Mother of us all
Dreams and new beginnings
Flowing over all

Lost Words Blessing – Spell Songs

Enter the wild with care, my love
And speak the things you see
Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you travel far from heather, crag and river
May you like the little fisher set the stream alight with glitter
May you enter now as otter without falter into water

Look to the sky with care, my love
And speak the things you see
Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you journey on past dying stars exploding
Like the gilded one in flight, leave your little gifts of light
And in the dead of night, my darling
Find the gleaming eye of starling
Like the little aviator, sing your heart to all dark matter

Walk through the world with care, my love
And sing the things you see
Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you stumble through machair sands eroding
Let the fern unfurl your grieving, let the heron still your breathing
Let the selkies swim you deeper
Oh, my little silver seeker
Even as the hour grows bleaker, be the singer and the speaker
And in city and in forest, let the larks become your chorus

And when every hope is gone
Let the raven call you home

