

## On Hearing Morning Bird Song

You know that half-awake moment when you lie in the peachy dawn, balancing last night's whispering dreams with filtered call of a new day.

You know how when you lie in cocooned warmth and the first sounds are the quavering phrases of robin, how the river of its song threads away

through hawthorn hedge, telling of mist and chill, notes hanging like icicles in the still air. You listen, as your ancestors would, to the music at first light

as wren and dunnock add their staccato notes and far away, by the river, song thrush throws its repeated call from alder tree, 'awake, awake.'

Now you remember reading how birds sing louder to be heard above passing beatbox cars, 'vehicle is reversing' squawks from nearby farms.

And you remember a time-lapse video you saw, playing back through a landscape as centuries pass: Victorian, Mediaeval, Anglo-Saxon, Iron Age.

How each scene added more sound, more birds, layering song, mixed with the rich symphony of these places where once we dwelled in harmony.

Pull your mind back from the deep past, hear melody of morning, as the frost falls in pitter-patter puddles, sun now climbing in a bright March day.

You read somewhere that bird song is important for mental health, how it was probably the first music we heard, and how we learned to talk by listening.

As bird song spins and weaves across the village, you reach for chords of memory, hum a few notes like a thin cry, into a day you wish would never come.

## Waiting for a Poem

I am waiting for a poem in June's too hot heat  
as the grass shrivels to brown crust and birch  
sheds leaves too early for an English garden.  
I reach for poems like drops of water to refresh  
my spirit with song of chaffinch in cherry tree,  
clouds dotting hillsides with daffodils, skaters  
on frozen rivers, dew drops on a scented rose.

Weeks become months without rain, and sun,  
angry as a boil, seems too big for our green planet.  
Elsewhere rivers run in brown tides, mud slides  
from mountains, earth trembles and shakes  
as if to destroy us before we destroy ourselves.  
I search in vain for words of hope and wisdom,  
of love and celebration for this fragile place.

Watch the tide suck at cliffs and take another  
piece of Suffolk, drowning it beneath wind farms  
spreadeagled across the spangled sea. Watch  
where the fertile plains of Doggerland lie buried  
and know we may be one more lost civilisation.  
Where are the poets to sing of swallows' return,  
joy of flower-filled meadow, running of hare?

Who now stands in awe of the night sky? Moon  
still beckons but night's churn of pinpricked stars  
no longer wheels in darkness. Moths no longer  
bat softly against windows, no nightingale sings.  
Where are the poets to add their voices to earth's  
anthology? Where is talk of hope? Where the call  
for action? Who will sing out and who will listen?