

# Peace and Quiet in Troubled Times

February 2026

Welcome to this opportunity to give yourself time and space away from the daily tasks, worries and fears which put our minds in turmoil. You are invited to focus on the music, words and pictures. You may find it helpful to read the poems out loud and then to keep silences in between, entering into an oasis of calm, to engage in 'mindfulness'. Each month we explore a different theme, relevant to our common experiences of life and the world around us. We follow the pattern of the seasons of the Church year.

*Please click on the underlined text beneath the images to hear the music via YouTube. Please do skip any adverts that appear.*

*A New Year: letting in the light of hope.*



Leonard Cohen – Anthem  
<https://youtu.be/mX2xIW7Oa9c>

## Anthem

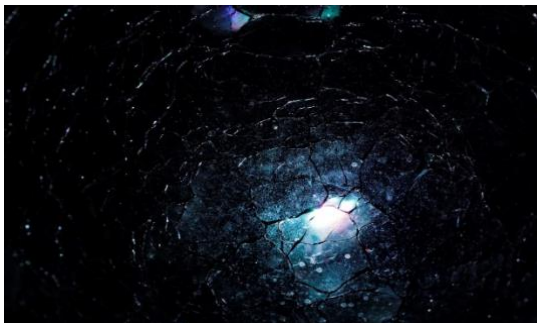
The birds they sang  
At the break of day  
Start again  
I heard them say  
Don't dwell on what has passed away  
Or what is yet to be  
  
Ah, the wars they will be fought again  
The holy dove, she will be caught again

Bought and sold, and bought  
again  
The dove is never free  
Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in  
everything  
That's how the light gets in

We asked for signs  
The signs were sent  
The birth betrayed  
The marriage spent  
Yeah, and the widowhood  
Of every government  
Signs for all to see

I can't run no more  
With that lawless crowd  
While the killers in high places  
Say their prayers out loud  
But they've summoned, they've summoned up  
A thundercloud  
They're going to hear from me

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in



You can add up the parts  
But you won't have the sum  
You can strike up the march  
There is no drum  
Every heart, every heart  
To love will come  
But like a refugee

Ring the bells that still can  
ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in  
everything  
That's how the light gets in

Ring the bells that still can  
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Leonard Cohen

### Poem for a New Year

Something's moving in,  
I hear the weather in the wind,  
sense the tension of a sheep-field  
and the pilgrimage of fins.

Something's not the same,  
I taste the sap and feel the grain,  
hear the rolling of the rowan  
ringing, singing in a change.

Something's set to start,  
there's meadow-music in the dark  
and the clouds that shroud the mountain  
slowly, softly start to part.

Matt Goodfellow

## The Return

This morning I heard by the silence that spring had come back  
in bare feet and like a child, white and shivering -  
after eight weeks of banged gates and trees raging;  
sleet thick against the windows  
and even the lochan breathed with a piece of ice.

The child came back and outside  
I found a robin singing the silence;  
that full throat orange with the promise  
that after all there might be light -  
we might begin again.

Kenneth Steven



Una Mattina – Ludovico Einaudi

<https://youtu.be/MPlkHxFA-Qg>

## Sunrise

You don't need to make your own hope -  
the sky is full of it.

Wake up early one day  
(I dare you)  
and watch the sun rise,

watch how it encourages the Earth  
to become itself, only more so,

watch how it allows all things,  
even the sad beings,  
to be colourful, and  
beautiful,

then listen, listen as it says  
quietly, yet undoubtedly,  
'We begin again.'

Gideon Heugh



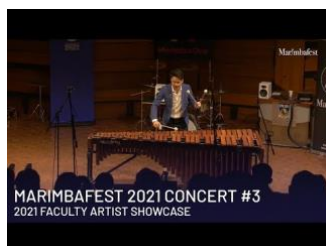
### Hope is the thing with feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson



Hope – Adam Tan

<https://youtu.be/FTg6uiYj0jM>

## Days

What are days for?  
Days are where we live,  
They come, they wake us  
Time and time over.  
They are to be happy in:  
Where can we live but days?

Ah, solving that question  
Brings the priest and the doctor  
In their long coats  
Running over the fields.

Philip Larkin

## Happy the man

Happy the man, and happy he alone,  
He who can call today his own;  
He who, secure within, can say:  
'Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.  
Be fair or foul or rain or shine,  
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.  
Not heav'n itself upon the past has pow'r;  
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.'

John Dryden



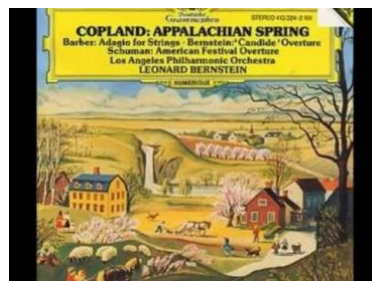
## Gifts

Gifts come in strange ways -  
when we least expect them;  
when they're hardly needed;  
when we're unprepared...

Gifts of hope  
in the midst of sadness;  
gifts of healing  
in the face of brokenness;  
gifts of love  
in the depths of despair.

Help me to expect the gift of hope  
even when I didn't think there'd be one;  
make me ready for the gift of healing  
even when I didn't know I needed one;  
prepare me now for the gift of love  
even when I didn't believe love would be enough.

Tom Gordon



Simple Gifts – Leonard Bernstein  
<https://youtu.be/Jl6RYZygevA>

## Of Price and Worth

Let the ordinary be in your hand;  
hold it open and imagine a bird landing,  
offering all it possesses in trust  
to come to you.

Learn to look for the little things  
that weigh nothing at all,  
but fill the heart with such light  
they can never be measured.

Kenneth Steven

## What?

What are riches?

What we have but did not earn ...  
What we own but did not create ...  
What we cherish but did not deserve ...  
What we value but did not achieve ...

What is poverty?

What we need but do not find ...  
What we deserve but do not attain ...  
What we work for but do not receive ...  
What we hope for but never fulfil...

What is awareness?

What we see and choose to know ...  
What we listen to and choose to hear ...  
What we learn and choose to heed ...  
What we feel and choose to understand ...

What is giving?

What we have and decide to share ...  
What we own and decide to give away ...  
What we cherish and decide to let go ...  
What we value for ourselves and decide to value for others ...

Tom Gordon



Louis Armstrong - What a wonderful World

[https://youtu.be/rBrd\\_3VMC3c](https://youtu.be/rBrd_3VMC3c)

## Blessing Words are more than Words

May words of acknowledgement,  
words of apology,  
words of comfort,  
words of concession,  
words of conciliation,  
words of encouragement,  
words of sympathy,  
words promising assistance,  
words to meet a need,  
words combined with kind actions  
dispel the anger  
depression  
despair and  
despondency  
that is all around us.

May we bless our neighbours  
with our mouths as well as  
with our hands.

Peter Comaish



Edvard Grieg – Morning  
<https://youtu.be/x463zoWpiVI>