Peace and Quiet in Troubled Times
October 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 Church year.

Please click on the underlined text beneath the images to hear the music via YouTube.
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Seek a Blessing of Trees

'Finland is officially the world's happiest country. It is also 75 per cent forest. I believe these facts are related.' Matt Haig

https://youtu.be/9DpmQjRxXKY
Original Environmental Song – Mia Black

'Forests are the world's air-conditioning system - the lungs of the planet - and we are on the verge of switching it off'

King Charles III

Trees

Bare tracery against a
Flawless sky; promise of
Spring, sap-rising, bursting
Into leaf; fullness of
Flower at summer's height;
Flowers, fruit and then
Fulfilment in the autumn
Fire. Symbol of life and
Death and resurrection,
Endlessly repeated,
Growing to completion.
Standing deep-rooted,
Moving with the wind,
Offering shelter and
Strength to all who come,
Embodying ageless wisdom.

Here I will rest, and let the
Silence penetrate my depths,
Giving me timeless space
To grow and be.

Ann Lewin

That each day I may walk unceasingly on the banks of my water, that my soul may repose on the branches of the trees which I planted, that I may refresh myself under the shadow of my sycamore.

-Egyptian tomb inscription, circa 1400 BC

The Silence of the Trees

There is a grace
that we cannot remember,
a peace that has passed
our understanding.

For who cares to listen
to the silence of the trees?
Who ventures out into the quiet
of their own soul?

Who in this age of deafening hurry
can find that gentle answer
hidden so wisely
in the heart of an autumn leaf?

Gideon Heugh

'Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts they preach undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.' *Hermann Hesse*

https://youtu.be/Ha0i6RUu_Hg?t=3417
Autumn Forest Ambience - Music by Adrian von Ziegler

'Learn character from trees, value from roots and change from leaves' *Tasneern Harneed*

Awakening

Out of twelve acorns I picked in the wood
Just one grew tall. I'd been away
The first half of July, came back
To thunder, floods, a garden gone to seed.
And then, that evening, I saw the stem
Rising high as my hand.

I bent to behold a miracle, the bitterness
Of weeds and grass all gone.
I touched three leaves – crinkled things
With cut-out edges, like those of grown-up oaks.
Eleven acorns still lay fast asleep
Deep in dark earth. One had become a tree.
Kenneth Steven

The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too.
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.
Philip Larkin

Lost

a forest clearing where the sun
slants inwards on the stems of trees
and a wood wasp is the only thing
that sings the silence sweet

for I know well that there are times
when lost inside a forest is
not bad but beautiful, when this
is almost then akin

to being deep inside a gem of green
where light and shadow only play
and nothing else is true except
the secrecy of somewhere strange

to be a child again instead
unmapped and free outwith the world
and wait there for the dark to rise –
in honeycombs of stars and stars

Kenneth Steven

https://youtu.be/TOHYkccYfUk?t=3461
Birds in the autumn trees

'Trees are the poems that the earth writes upon the sky'
Kahlil Gibran

Lines for Autumn

Leaves make their golden turn
unhurried,
then in cooler air
waltz to the damp ground
and in sweet-scented crowd
make happiness
for wellington boots.

Gideon Heugh

Winter trees

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.

William Carlos Williams

Hope

Hope is a golden leaf
falling to the ground.
It knows that one day
it will become the soil;
it knows that one day a seed
will settle into its dark arms;
that roots, blind
but seeking still,
will spread into the deep.

Gideon Heugh

https://youtu.be/poAb0MhEvmk
The tale of Vienna woods – Strauss

For in the true nature of things, if we rightly consider, every green tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold and silver
Martin Luther

Autumn Prayer

Help me to love myself
in the same way that I love
the sunbeam
and the scent of fallen leaves.

Help me to hold myself
in the same way I am held
by the autumn morning
stretching its golden arms
around my heart.

And help me to believe
increasingly
in this world of aching wonder,
which somehow
includes me.

Gideon Heugh

Peace trees

To be in the presence of trees
Is to know peace.
The silent rhythm of their life,
Bringing maturity in due time,
Without anxiety or haste,
Calms our impatience;
Their solid strength, derived from
Hidden roots spreading much further
Than we ever know, gives us security;
Grace, beauty, shapeliness and form,
Delight our senses, soothe our
Fragile nerves, and bring refreshment.

Let us in turn be trees,
Growing in God's time to maturity,
Spreading our roots deep into springs of life,
Opening branches wide to all who come
Offering strength and healing through our
Peace.

Ann Lewin

'Time spent amongst trees is never wasted time' Katrina Mayer

Seek a Blessing of Trees

As part of creation,
like the wood of the cross,
may God bless us.

May we know, like the oak, how to stand:
rooted in truth;
reaching for light;
patiently enduring and growing;
sheltering without favour,
all who come into our shade;
and become part of the rock on which we rest.

May we learn, like the willow, how to bend:
flexing in hope;
twisting in love;
moving with the breeze of the Spirit;
receiving the pressures of others for
accommodating their pain;
and trusting that, in God's time, all will return.

May we find, like the pine, an evergreen way:
clothed in life;
ever productive;
bearing the colour of Christ in all seasons;
never succumbing to dark winter no matter how
bleak today may seem;
and, when we are cut (for we shall be), letting our
fragrance spread, for God's sake.

Like the wood of the cross,
may God bless us.

Duncan L Tuck

https://youtu.be/15pe_mh0Lqs
Pelagia's Song – Warbeck

A Rowan Tree

In open moorland, there you stand,
Alone, it seems, amidst a land
So bleak and barren, wild and bare,
That never life would venture there.

And yet, you do not stand alone;
For all around, in scattered stone
Of fallen walls and chimney breasts,
Are signs of homes which welcomed guests,

As loving families, with accord,
Shared tears and laughter, bed and board;
Where children played, and cattle roamed
Around the school, and church and home.

Now, rowan tree, alone you stay
To guard these ruins, night and day,
And tell your tales in whispered breath
Of living stones, and not of death…

For what was good in what was here
No hour or day or month or year
Can e'er erode from memory's cache –
You tell of this, fair mountain ash.

So in the stillness of this day,
I listen as I pass this way,
And hear the rowan speak to me
Of all that was and yet shall be.

Tom Gordon

Without End

James…turned away to go home by the short cut through the churchyard and over the wall into Pound Lane. It was, he thought, the most perfectly splendid evening he could remember. The sky was huge and clean and empty over Ledsham, a soft violet colour, with a feathery moon rising beyond the line of trees that fringed the churchyard. The trees were almost bare of leaves, their delicate branches splayed against the sky, loaded with the shaggy forms of rooks' nests. Above them, the rooks swirled and planed, rising and falling in invisible currents of air.

James walked down the path and then under the trees. Grey, ribbed trunks reached up and up over his head to meet a canopy of branches that was like the vaulting of a cathedral, and from this roof came spinning down dozens and hundreds of leaves. He looked at the branches near his head and saw suddenly that the new leaves were already there, sharp, folded shapes, shiny brown tips of beech and chestnut and elm. He walked on… and the old leaves fell silently around him and piled up under his feet and above them the branches held up new ones, furled and secret, waiting for the spring. Time reached away behind and ahead…forward to other people who would leave their names in this place, look with different eyes on the same streets, rooftops, trees. And somewhere in the middle there was James, walking home for tea, his head full of confused but agreeable thoughts, hungry and a little tired, but content.

Penelope Lively
from 'The Ghost of Thomas Kempe'

https://youtu.be/FZe3mXlnfNc
Spiegel im Spiegel – Arvo Pärt