

At the Turning of the Year

Herdman ❁ Hills ❁ Mangsen

Hand & Heart Music #2000

At the Turning of the Year

w&m by Anne Hills

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I wrote this in hopes that it would get audiences singing! A sort of upbeat "Auld Lang Syne." — AH

When the hunter and the bull are chasing down the setting sun
Dissolving in an icy blue beyond the grey horizon
We turn to feed the fading fire, dream deeply through the night
And cherish songs that carry us from darkness into light

CHORUS

And we will sing, we will sing at the turning of the year
Knowing, knowing ... We are a short time here
And so we'll sing, yes we'll sing at the turning of the year
At the dancing, spinning, turning of the year

When the greater and the lesser bear sleep soundly in the sky
And the seven dancing Iroquois across the heavens fly
We turn our backs against the wind that drives the bitter cold
And celebrate the wonders that a new year will unfold

And we will sing ...

When the evergreen stands silently against the broken land
And the icicle, like Spring's cocoon, is spun by Winter's hand
We turn to friends and family, and mourn the loved ones gone
And gather them around us as we raise our voice in song

And we will sing ...

(Here together ... hand and heart)

Now the solstice moon is like a pearl suspended in the lake
Frozen underneath a spell no human hand can break
We turn to ask forgiveness, and with gratefulness of heart
Turn once again to welcome in the new year as it starts

Candlemas Eve

Lyrics by R. Herrick, music by unknown; P.D.

A carol for February 1st found in the Oxford Book of Carols. The lyrics are attributed to R. Herrick (1591-1674). The tune is from an old church-gallery book discovered by the Rev. L.J.T. Darwall. — CM

Down with the rosemary and bays
Down with the mistletoe
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show
The holly hitherto did sway
Let box now domineer
Until the dancing Easter day
Or Easter's eve appear

Then youthful box which now hath grace
Your houses to renew
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped yew
When yew is out then birch comes in
And many flowers beside
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin
To honor Whitsuntide

Green rushes then and sweetest bents
With cooler oaken boughs
Come in for comely ornaments
To readorn the house
Thus times do shift, thus times do shift

Each thing his turn does hold
New things succeed, new things succeed
As former things grow old

The Winter It Is Past

Traditional, with additional words by Robert Burns

We heard this song sung by Archie Fisher who says it is a Scottish version of the Irish Song "The Curragh of Kildare." — CM

Oh the winter it is past and the summer's come at last
And the small birds sing on every green tree
And their little hearts are glad but mine is ever sad
Since my true love is far away from me

Oh the rose among the briar by the water running clear
Brings joy to the linner and the bee
And their little hearts are blessed but mine can know no rest
Since my true love is far away from me

For my love is like the sun, in the firmament doth run
Forever constant and true
But his is like the moon that wanders up and down
And every month it is new

All you who are in love and cannot it remove
I pity the pain that you endure
For experience lets me know that your hearts are full of woe
And a sorrow no mortal can cure

Forget-Me-Not

w&m by Anne Hills & Michael Smith

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I think people begin to notice and become more passionate about flowers as they get older. All of a sudden I'm looking up names and buying Field Guides, amazed at the variety. — AH

Marigold and roses, columbine and twining morning glory
Lavender, sweet william, forget-me-not
Violet and daisy, buttercup and lily-of-the-valley
Evening star and blue bell, forget-me-not

There's a wind that's calling, from the north sometimes
And it's no matter how fair the weather
It wakes me from my sleeping, I'm restless to be moving
From the place where we lie together

When I was a little girl, I could hold the moon
Do it just by lifting, lifting up my hand
To the sky at night, as I lay by my window
Just the stars and I together

Love don't turn your face
Don't wander far from this place
The moon, she walks the sky
She leads the way from you and I

Marigold and roses, columbine and twining morning glory
Lavender, sweet william, forget-me-not
Violet and daisy, buttercup and lily-of-the-valley
Evening star and blue bell, forget-me-not

Swinton May Song

Traditional English, from the Watersons

We learned this carol from the Watersons' album For Pence and Spicy Ale. It's a carol from Yorkshire meant to be sung on or about May Eve, when villagers traveled from house to house singing, visiting, and hoping to collect a little food, drink, and money ... kind of what we do. — CM

All in this pleasant evening together come as we
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
We'll tell you of the blossom and of buds on every tree
Drawing near to the merry month of May

Rise up the master of this house all in your chain of gold
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
We hope you're not offended with your house we'll make so bold
Drawing near to the merry month of May

Rise up the mistress of this house with gold all on your breast
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
And if your body is asleep we hope your soul's at rest
Drawing near to the merry month of May

Rise up the children of this house all in your rich attire
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
And every hair all on your head shines like a silver wire
Drawing near to the merry month of May

God bless this house and arbor, your riches and your store
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
We hope the Lord will prosper you both now and evermore
Drawing near to the merry month of May

So now we're going to leave you in peace and plenty here
For the summer springs so fresh and green and gay
We will not sing you May again until another year
For to drive you these cold winter nights away

Goodbye to the Roses

Poem by Margaret Mantle, music by Jenny Armstrong; ©1995

Jenny Armstrong comes from a wonderful family of musicians. Her melody for this poem makes it even more poignant. — AH

Putting the garden to bed
Saying goodbye to the roses
Autumn leaves haloed in auburn and red
Weep fire for the year as it closes

CHORUS

Saying goodbye to the roses
Saying goodbye to the flowers
Saying goodbye to the roses
Weep fire for the year as it closes

Time is the thief in the falling leaf
The chill on a dream grown cold
The love that was new when the year was new
May be old when the year is old

Autumn is hard for the one who grieves
And hard for the waiting heart
Summer's a lover who always leaves
Before it's the right time to part

Winter will pass like a sad slow song
Soon a new Spring will start
Nothing endures the whole year long
Save hope in the willing heart

Away Ye Merry Lasses

w&m by George Holper, ©1989; All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

You might have heard this song during one of our early tours. We did it for a while and it got nudged out, but the witches of fall brought it back just in time. We learned it from Linda Waterfall's Flying Time recording. — AH

I told me mum I was goin' out
She asked what I was all about
I asked if I could take the broom
I'm going to meet the girls

Oh, the moon is wax tonight
and don't ya like the fellas?
I prefer the girls tonight
I'm goin' to ride the wind

CHORUS

'Cause it's the girls' night out
Away ye merry lassies
Get your brooms, get 'em out
We'll ride the wind tonight
Oh it's the girls' night out
Away ye merry lassies
Get your brooms, get 'em out
We'll ride the wind tonight

My sister is so bold and free
She asked if she could come with me
I saw her up above the trees
A-goin' to ride the wind

Oh, the moon is wax tonight
And don't ya like the fellas?
I prefer the girls tonight
I'm goin' to ride the wind CHORUS

As we were goin' out the gate
We saw my dear old mother
Ridin' the broom and hummin' a tune
Goin' to meet the girls

Oh, the moon is wax tonight
And don't ya like the fellas?
I prefer the girls tonight
I'm goin' to ride the wind CHORUS

Uncle Dave's Grace

lyrics by Peter Berryman, music by Lou Berryman

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We are Berryman groupies, and love so many of their songs it's hard to choose just one. Peter says this is based on an actual event ... but all their songs are. — CM

“We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing”

Thanksgiving day, Uncle Dave was our guest
He reads the Progressive which makes him depressed
We asked Uncle Dave if he'd like to say grace,
A dark desolation crept over his face
“Thanks,” he began as he gazed at his knife,
“To poor Mr. Turkey for living his life
All crowded and cramped in a great metal shed
Where life was a drag then they cut off his head

“Thanks,” he went on, “for the grapes in my wine
Picked by sick women of seventy-nine
Scrambling all mornin for bunch after bunch
Then brushing the pesticides off of their lunk
Thanks for the stuffing all heaped on my fork
Shiny with sausage descended from pork
I think of the trucks full of full of pigs that I see
And can't help imagine what they think of me”

Continuing, “I’d like to thank if you please
Our salad bowl hacked out of tropical trees
And for this mahogany table and chair
We thank all the jungles that used to be there
For cream in our coffee and milk in our mugs,
We thank all the cows full of hormones and drugs
Whose calves are removed at a very young age
And force-fed as veal in a minuscule cage

“Oh thanks for the furnace that heats up these rooms
And thanks for the rich fossil fuel it consumes
Corrupting the atmosphere ounce after ounce
But we’re warm and toasty and that is what counts
I’m grateful,” he said, “for these clothes on my back
Lovely and comfy and cheap off the rack
Fashioned in warehouses noisy and cold
In China by seamstresses seven years old

“And thanks for my silverware setting that shines
In memory of miners who died in the mines
Worn down by the shoveling of tailings in piles
Whose runoff destroys all the rivers for miles
We thank the reactors for our chandelier
Although the plutonium won’t disappear
For hundreds of decades it still will be there
But a few more Chernobyls and who’s gonna care?”

Sighed Uncle Dave, “though there’s more to be told
The wine’s getting warm and the bird’s getting cold”
And with that he sat down as he mumbled again
“Thank you for everything, amen”
We felt so guilty when he was all thru
It seemed there was one of two things we could do
Live without food, in the nude, in a cave,
Or next year have someone say grace besides Dave

Solstice Round

w&m by Cindy Mangsen; ©2000 Compass Rose Music / BMI
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She who can love both sun and moon
Joyful in both seed and bloom
Sound and silence, dark and light
Has nothing to fear from the long winter’s night

Darkness take flight
Earth dreams of light
Fire burn hot and bright
On the longest night of the year

The Snow

w&m by Allen Power; ©1999 Night Wind Music / BMI
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Al Power has been a friend of the trio since we first formed, giving us “Waiting for Isabella,” a favorite from our “Voices” CD. With this song he challenged himself to write a traditional sounding, scary ballad (knowing that is Cindy’s favorite kind). We think he succeeded! — AH

The snow, the snow, it covers the ground
The birches shiver and bend
And the west wind wails with a mournful sound
Of a spirit lost on the land

I met my love on a sweet April morn
When the heather returned to the hills
He called me beauty, a rose among thorns
And I gave my heart with a will

He worked by day in Aberdeen town
And late returned to my bed,
Though his kisses lingered as soft as the down
Strange voices came into my head.

“Beware, beware,” sang the whistling lark.
“Sweet lies,” cried the nighthawk above.
“False heart, false heart,” the ravens did bark.
“Poor fool, poor fool,” cooed the dove.

Late one night as I sat by the fire
With the voices loud in my ears
The door flew open, the flames rose higher
And a demon’s form did appear.

He bared his claws and his eyes burned red
He spoke with the voice of the crow,
“Before this sunrise your love will lie dead,
And peace you never will know.”

I pulled a pistol from under my cloak
A pall fell over his face
His body crumbled in fire and smoke
But my love lay dead in his place.

And now, the voices have left me alone
The birds are solemn and still
And I roam this wide world of ice and of stone
To cool the fires of hell.

The snow, the snow, it covers the ground
The birches shiver and bend
And the west wind wails with a mournful sound
Of a spirit lost on the land

The Druggist

(w&m by Joel Mabus; ©1997 Joel Mabus / Fingerboard Music / BMI)
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I heard Joel Mabus do this at a festival a number of years ago and was thrilled that he had recorded it. It would have been a hard one to learn via the phone lines. — AH

So, now you have a cold,
You didn’t do as you were told
You went out without galoshes in the rain.
And you spent your late nights boozing,
Instead of home a’ snoozing
And now you’ve just begun to feel the pain.
The viruses inside of you,
Are multiplying two by two
And dance the Macarena in your brain.
You’re eyelids thick and droopy,
Your nose is raw and soupy
You ask for my advice.
Let me explain ...

CHORUS
You need to take acetaminophen
Or just a little aspirin acetylsalicylic for the pain
A dose of guaifenesin, plain and simple Robutussin
To liquify the mucus membranes
Oxymatazoline or phenylpropanolamine
To open up the sinuses and such
Then try to recoup with a little chicken soup
Call your mother cause it pays to keep in touch

You have tried those new age therapies,
And herbal homeopathies
High colonic nozzles and the rest.
But those echinacean potions
And royal jelly lotions
Have failed to tame the panther in your chest.
Those crystal packing druids
Cannot abate the fluids
That drizzle from your nostrils to your vest.
The answer it is plain to see,
Is found within my pharmacy
So, step right in and be my guest.

CHORUS

Corn, Water & Wood

w&m by Carol Elliott & Wendy Waldman

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This was sung around a campfire at Tom Noe’s house in Texas, and I fell in love with it. — CM

I was in the arroyo gathering strays
You know cowboys and cattle don’t get holidays
And I would have been finished except for one little guy
Who kept leading me farther away

I went up on the mesa, across the ravine
Past the Indian ruins and muddy red stream
And I stopped for a minute ‘cause I was bone tired
And I guess that I started to dream

I saw three painted horses, three dark skinned men
With masks made of clay and voices like wind

Singing we seek the soul of all that is good
We come bearing corn, water and wood
Stop and behold all that is good
Give thanks for the corn, water and wood

I’m an old trail hound and always believed
That your boots and your saddle are all that you leave
No miracles happen, no angels appear
But I’d swear three men were standing there

I shook myself over, had I been asleep?
That’s just three pueblo children tending their sheep
And they yelled “Merry Christmas” and they were leading my stray
And their voices rang through the mesquite

Years

w&m by Beth Neilsen Chapman;

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Priscilla had been doing this song on our winter tour and we liked it so much we added our voices and asked to include it on the new recording. — AH

I went home for Christmas to the house that I grew up in
Going back was something after all these years
I drove down Monterey Street and felt a little sadness
When I turned left on Laurel and the house appeared

And I snuck up to that rocking chair
Where the Winter sunlight slanted on the screened-in porch
And I stared out past the shade tree
That my laughing Daddy planted on the day that I was born

CHORUS
And I let time go by so slow
And I made every moment last
And I thought about years
How they take so long
And they go so fast

Across the street the Randol’s oldest daughter must have come home
Her two boys built a snowman by the backyard swings
I thought of old man Randol and his Christmas decorations
And how he used to leave them up till early spring

And I thought about the summers
That I paced that porch and swore I’d die of boredom there
And I thought of what I’d give to feel
Another summer linger where a day feels like a year

CHORUS

Then the door flew open and my Mother’s voice was laughing
As she called back to my daddy, “Come and look who’s here”

And I thought about years ...

Winter’s Come and Gone

w&m: Gillian Welch & David Rawlings

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Priscilla brought this song to our attention but it was so short. Since Gillian Welch’s songs are so “in the tradition” it was easy to pair it up with “Mississippi Sawyer” which I learned from the banjo playing of my dear friend Tyler Wilson. — AH

Oh little red bird – come to my window sill
Been so lonesome – shaking that morning chill
Oh little red bird – open your mouth and say
Been so lonesome – just about flown away

CHORUS
So long now I’ve been out
In the rain and snow
But winter’s come and gone
A little bird told me so

Oh little blue bird – pearly feather breast
Five cold nickels’ – all I got left
Oh little blue bird – What am I gonna do
Five cold nickels – ain’t gonna see me through

CHORUS

Oh little black bird – on my wire line
Dark as trouble – in this heart of mine
Poor little black bird – sings a worried song
Dark as trouble – ‘til winter’s come and gone

CHORUS (2x)