

# SONGS *FROM* HERE



## Woods & Waters

### *Program Notes & Texts:*

Maine is a terrific place to call home. One of the most appealing things about living here is our proximity to nature. We are spoiled for choice among the cool, fragrant woodlands, the breezy, bracing oceanfront, the still ponds and surging rivers... wherever you might look for peace, for answers, for inspiration, you'll find it here, sometimes just around the corner or in your own backyard.

This program is an homage to the natural world of Maine, and the songs contained within offer glimpses of how we connect with it. Moments of contemplation, exhilaration, and wonder - all can be found in the woods and waters of Maine.

*-Sarah Tuttle*



## Im Walde Franz Schubert

Our program begins with “Im Walde,” a surge of energy as Schubert guides us on a nighttime journey into the woods. With the piano line propelling us ever forward, we traverse rugged terrain, make our way along forest streams, and even manage to navigate a storm. The forest itself becomes a metaphor for life’s journey - dark and mysterious, exhilarating and fleeting. Poet Friedrich von Schlegel invites us to embrace it all, taking the horse by the reins and allowing creativity to drive us forward.

Im Walde „Waldesnacht“  
German source: Friedrich von Schlegel

Windes Rauschen, Gottes Flügel,  
Tief in kühler Waldesnacht;  
Wie der Held in Rosses Bügel,  
Schwingt sich des Gedankens Macht.  
Wie die alten Tannen sausen,  
Hört man Geistes Wogen brausen.

Herrlich ist der Flamme Leuchten  
In des Morgenglanzes Rot,  
Oder die das Feld beleuchten,  
Blitze, schwanger oft von Tod.  
Rasch die Flamme zuckt und lodert,  
Wie zu Gott hinauf gefordert.

Ewig's Rauschen sanfter Quellen,  
Zaubert Blumen aus dem Schmerz;  
Trauer doch in linden Wellen  
Schlägt uns lockend an das Herz;  
Fernab hin der Geist gezogen,  
Die uns locken, durch die Wogen.

In the forest 'Night in the forest'  
English translation © Richard Wigmore

The rushing of the wind, God's own wings,  
deep in the cool night of the forest,  
as the hero leaps on to his horse,  
so does the power of thought soar.  
As the old pine-trees rustle,  
so we hear the surging waves of the spirit.

Glorious is the flame's glow  
in the red light of morning,  
or the flashes that light up the fields,  
often pregnant with death.  
Swiftly the flame flickers and blazes,  
as if summoned upward to God.

The eternal murmuring of gentle springs  
conjures flowers from sorrow;  
yet sadness beats alluringly against our  
hearts in gentle waves.  
The spirit is borne far away  
by those waves that allure us.

Drang des Lebens aus der Hülle,  
Kampf der starken Triebe wild;  
Wird zur schönsten Liebesfülle,  
Durch des Geistes Hauch gestillt.  
Schöpferischer Lüfte Wehen  
Fühlt man durch die Seele gehen.

Life's urge to be free of its fetters,  
the struggle of strong, wild impulses,  
is turned to love's fair fulfilment,  
stilled by the breath of the spirit.  
We feel the creative breath  
pervade our souls.

Windes Rauschen, Gottes Flügel,  
Tief in kühler Waldesnacht!  
Frei gegeben alle Zügel,  
Schwingt sich des Gedankens Macht,  
Hört in Lüften ohne Grausen  
Den Gesang der Geister brausen.

The rushing of the wind, God's own wings,  
deep in the cool night of the forest;  
free from all restraints  
the power of thought soars;  
without fear we hear the song of the spirits  
echoing in the breezes.



## Songs From Here - Suite No. 2 Erica Ball

**Mary Sheeline** (*My love is a mountain*) was born in 1957 in Long Island, NY, but made it a priority to spend time at her family property on Vinalhaven, Maine. She dedicated her life to the service of others, first as a special education teacher in California and later, returning to the embrace of her mid-coast roots, as a massage therapist in Rockland, Maine.

Mary sang in various groups for most of her life, most notably with the Down East Singers in Thomaston, with whom she traveled to Europe to sing the music of Rachmaninoff. She also loved to write, sprinkling her musings, memories, and poetry around her house in notebooks and journals. Among other things, she enjoyed writing about the strength of self, women, and nature. Mary died on December 12, 2022, from complications from breast cancer. She is remembered fondly for her gentleness, her profound love of people and nature, her desire to heal those around her, and to leave the world a little kinder.

My love is a mountain.

From every deep thicket,  
From every hidden canyon,  
I can see my mountain's sides...  
Her sides are broad.  
They're open.  
They're warmed by the everlasting Sun.  
They're cooled by the soothing fingers  
of shadow gracing her face.

For many miles I travel to my mountain.  
My view is always steady, always clear.  
Her beauty envelopes my spirit  
And I am comforted.

My mountain is forever.

And she sits solid,  
Visible from everywhere.  
As approached, she'll touch you with her spirit...

My love is a mountain and she is forever.

**Cornelia “Fly Rod” Crosby** (*Fly Rod’s Notebook, All dry walking*) was an iconic figure in American outdoor culture (1854-1946). Born in Phillips, Maine, her childhood adventures in the wilderness ignited a lifelong passion for nature and fly fishing. She became the first registered Maine Guide, renowned for her unmatched fishing skills and deep knowledge of the state’s wilderness.

Crosby’s influence extended beyond angling. She was a gifted writer and passionate conservationist, using her work to advocate for preserving Maine’s natural beauty. Her commitment to sustainable conservation practices and responsible outdoor enjoyment made her a trailblazer in her time.

One of her most significant achievements was breaking gender barriers in outdoor sports. Crosby hosted fly fishing clinics and exhibitions, encouraging women to embrace the sport. Her legacy lives on as an enduring symbol of inclusivity in outdoor recreation.

Text adapted from “Fly Rod’s Notebook” in the Phillips Phonograph, April 27, 1900

It seems to me that “Mother Nature” never did her spring’s work, of disposing of the ice and snow, in quite such a rush as this spring time. Why, it is all dry walking; green grass and May flowers are coming. The martins set up housekeeping yesterday, the robins and sparrows are here, and if it were not for the snow banks we can see in the woods and on the hillsides, we should forget how short a time since it was ice and snow everywhere.

**Edna St. Vincent Millay** (*Searching my heart for its true sorrow*) was born in Rockland, ME in 1892 and spent her early years living and writing in nearby Camden. She achieved literary fame, shared her talents internationally, and made a home in New York, but always wanted to return to her home state. She and her husband later purchased Ragged Island off the coast of Harpswell and it became her refuge for many years.

SEARCHING my heart for its true sorrow,  
This is the thing I find to be:  
That I am weary of words and people,  
Sick of the city, wanting the sea;  
Wanting the sticky, salty sweetness  
Of the strong wind and shattered spray;  
Wanting the loud sound and the soft sound  
Of the big surf that breaks all day.  
Always before about my dooryard,  
Marking the reach of the winter sea,  
Rooted in sand and dragging drift-wood,  
Straggled the purple wild sweet-pea;

Always I climbed the wave at morning,  
Shook the sand from my shoes at night,  
That now am caught beneath great buildings,  
Stricken with noise, confused with light.

If I could hear the green piles groaning  
Under the windy wooden piers,  
See once again the bobbing barrels,  
And the black sticks that fence the weirs,

If I could see the weedy mussels  
Crusting the wrecked and rotting hulls,  
Hear once again the hungry crying  
Overhead, of the wheeling gulls,

Feel once again the shanty straining  
Under the turning of the tide,  
Fear once again the rising freshet,  
Dread the bell in the fog outside,–

I should be happy,–that was happy  
All day long on the coast of Maine!  
I have a need to hold and handle  
Shells and anchors and ships again!

I should be happy, that am happy  
Never at all since I came here.  
I am too long away from water.  
I have a need of water near.



**Zde v lese u potoka**  
**Antonin Dvorak**

Who among us hasn't turned to time in the Maine woods for a little respite and mental clarity? Whether it's time up at camp, a long weekend backpacking, or simply an afternoon hike, time among the trees can be restorative and enlightening. Beautiful vistas large and small invite us to stop and take it all in - and in doing so, perhaps we learn a bit more about ourselves. In this next song by Antonin Dvorak, the speaker stops by a woodland stream to watch the water flow. A stone in the river bed finally surrenders to the current and rolls over, and the speaker is left wondering whether life will have the same effect.

Zde v lese u potoka  
(Gustav Pflieger-Moravsky)

In the woods by the stream  
Translation Djordje Nesic . 2006

Zde v lese u potoka  
Já stojím sám a sám;  
A ve potoka vlny  
V myšlenkách pozírám.

In the woods by the stream  
I stand all alone,  
And lost in my thoughts  
I gaze into the stream's eddy.

Tu vidím starý kámen,  
Nad nímž se vlny dmou;  
Ten kámen [vstoupa]1, padá  
Bez klidu pod vlnou.

There I see an old stone,  
Over which the water rolls.  
And that stone beneath the waves,  
Always rises and falls.

A proud se oň opírá,  
Až kámen zvrhne se:  
Kdy vlna života mne  
Se světa odnese?

The stone battles the waves,  
And finally overturns.  
When will the waves of life finally  
Sweep me away from this world?



### Siren', 'Lilacs' Sergei Rachmaninoff

You don't need to look far to find ways to connect with nature here - sometimes it's as simple as walking into your backyard to tend to your vegetable garden, fruit trees, or flower beds. It's easy to allow your mind to wander in comfortable surroundings, especially when you're surrounded by beautiful, fragrant lilacs - a common sight in dooryards and along garden gates here in Maine. "Lilacs," one of twelve romances written by Rachmaninoff to help pay for his upcoming wedding, explores daydreaming among the blossoms, searching for happiness, and falling short.



Siren, 'Lilacs'  
Russian source:  
Ekaterina Andreyena Beketova

Lilacs  
translation by Philip Ross Bullock

Poutru, na zare,  
Po rasistoj trave,  
Ya pajdu svezhym utrom dyshat';  
I v dushystuyu ten',  
Gde tesnitsya siren',  
Ya pojdu svoyo shchast'ye iskat'...

In the morning, at dawn,  
Through the dew-clad grass,  
I shall walk, breathing in the freshness  
of morning;  
And to the fragrant shade,  
Where lilacs cluster,  
I shall go in search of happiness...

V zhizni shchast'ye odno  
Mne najti suzhdeno,  
I to shchast'ye v sireni zhyvyot;  
Na zelyonykh vetvyakh,  
Na dushistykh kistyakh  
Moyo bednoe shchast'ye tsvetyot...

In life there is but one happiness  
That I am fated to find,  
And that happiness dwells in the lilacs;  
On their green branches,  
In their fragrant clusters  
My poor happiness blooms...



## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Ned Rorem

Whether just coming into leaf, changing color, or completely bare, Maine's trees have beauty to share with us all year long. Sometimes we're lucky enough to witness the changing seasons in the company of a dear companion - human or animal! Ned Rorem is just one of many composers to set Robert Frost's iconic poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," but his song perhaps best manages to capture the tranquil, almost static landscape - you can almost see each snowflake fall. In the poem, the speaker and his horse stop to admire the gentle snowfall deep in the forest. They take in the view, and enjoy the silence...before remembering obligations back at home.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening  
Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

*Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" from The Poetry of Robert Frost, edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1923, © 1969 by Henry Holt and Company, Inc., renewed 1951, by Robert Frost. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Source: Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays (Library of America, 1995)*



**Everything Has a Heart**  
**John Newell**

Last year the Songs From Here project commissioned me to compose a set of songs on poems by Maine-based poets. I truly enjoyed collaborating with Sarah on the extensive task of choosing texts. While the poems that we finally chose are quite different in tone and mood, each includes at least one non-human character; the sub-title of the set could well be “critters of Maine.” I am very pleased to dedicate this work to Sarah and Bridget.

*-John Newell*

Boulder  
by Sidney Wade

this world  
is full

of beautiful  
surprises

here's one:  
one bright

blue noon  
on Loon

Lake I sat  
on the porch

eating lunch  
and watched

a chipmunk  
on the compost

pile nibble  
a strand

of spaghetti  
until he'd

consumed  
it all and then

I heard  
a tremendous

fluster  
in the lake

a moose  
had quietly

been munching  
on underwater

plants---fine  
delicacies

to northern  
ruminant types

and what  
I had taken

to be a boulder  
turned out

to have been  
her shoulder

as her submerged  
mouth hovered

up all the juicy  
stems of my water

lilies until  
her hungry

lungs ached  
for air

and she reared  
her head

in a great  
splendor

of bright water  
a sloshing

slurping  
slurry

of mud  
and stems

profuse and  
dripping

from her  
streaming

maw as she  
observed

me coolly  
before

heading down  
for more

Gulls in the Wind  
Besty Sholl

Bedraggled feathers like bonnets  
that would fly off if they weren't strapped,  
kazoo voiced, a chorus of crying dolphins  
or rusty sirens a speck of dust could set off—  
these raucous gleaners milling around

pick up and discard, now a Q-tip,  
now a shred of lettuce or cellophane,  
a cigarette butt one holds a second  
as if he really might smoke. One drags  
an old condom, one spots a good crumb

and walk-runs, squawks everyone else away.  
But it's just a dried scrap of weed he'll toss back,  
grist for the next fool's expectation.  
Still, a loud alpha catches wind,  
scoots over to check it out. Shove off,

he screeches, this is my no-good, barren,  
motel-infested spit of sand—on which  
he neither toils or spins, but grubs all day  
on webbed feet and clever back-hinged knees,  
now skittishly sidestepping a gusty

piece of plastic blown against his legs,  
hopping to get it off, now shaking it  
once or twice to make sure it's worthless  
before he turns his face to the wind,  
letting it smooth those fine fractious feathers.

Some Clear Night  
Gary Lawless

Some clear night like this,  
when the stars are all out and shining,  
our old dogs will come back to us  
out of the woods, and lead us  
along the stone wall to the cove.  
There will be foxes, and loons,  
and a houseboat floating on the lake.  
The trees will lean in, a lantern  
swinging over the water, the creaking of oars.  
Now we will learn the true names of the stars.  
Now we will know what the trees are saying.  
There is wood in the stove.  
We left the front door open.  
Does the farmhouse know  
that we're never coming back?

Why Do You Ask?  
By Kate Barnes

I can't make  
any story  
about my life

tonight. The house  
is like an overturned  
wastebasket;

the radio  
is predicting  
more rain.

I ask my dog  
to tell me  
a story, and she

never hesitates

“Once upon  
a time,” she says,

“a woman lived  
with a simply  
wonderful dog...” and

she stops talking.

“Is that all?”

I ask her.

“Yes,” she says.

“Why do you ask?

Isn't that enough?”

In the Pasture

Kate Barnes

It would be impossible to draw these three workhorses  
without a pencil of light  
as they stand broadside to the afternoon sun  
outlined with narrow lines of fire around their vast  
chestnut forms, almost black against the dazzle.  
The young mare swings her long tail from hip to hip,  
and her Titian-blond mane hangs over her shoulder  
like the ringletted chevelure of a Victorian belle,  
innocent and alluring.

Beyond her

the two big geldings, brothers and team mates,  
scratch each other's wide red backs  
with careful incisors.



### Swallows fly

over the grass, cloud shadows cross the lake  
and darken the blue of the hills on the opposite shore  
but in the pasture the sun is shining,  
the afternoon wind has driven off the flies,  
and the three big horses are all at their ease;  
a small, happy society  
of souls who are gentle and do no harm,  
who live in God's pocket, who spend the long summer days  
moving from sunshine to shade and back to the sun,  
who want nothing but to be where they are.

### Everything Has a Heart

by Deborah Cummins

This bulb's hidden tulip  
with its single throb of color.  
Wild plum spilling a windfall  
of crimson fruit. A crow, oddly quiet,  
ruffling its iridescence from a branch  
of the oak. The oak itself, its gash  
where a woody knot boils out.

In my garden, leaning into my shovel,  
trusting in rain, roots and time,  
I remind myself everything has a heart –  
even God, I'm told, who holds  
the match to a new season's light,

ratchets up the wind as though it carries  
unfinished dreams, untold stories,

and who, I'm to believe, is directing  
the wild geese in their familiar ruckus  
as they write across the sky in a broken line,  
turning south, east, south again,  
their only intention to catch  
a good thermal, to sing hard,  
high above the earth.



**Night**  
**Florence Price**

Here in Maine we tend to remember big storms, be they ice, rain, or snow. Who doesn't love a good storm story - especially with a tiny bit of exaggeration? We take pride in our ability to weather the wind and rain...but nature can be gentle and kind, too. We have especially beautiful sunrises and sunsets here, and you don't need to go far to find a place to admire them, whatever the time of year. Nightfall brings with it changing light, vivid color, and the sounds of creatures waking up and preparing for rest. In this 1946 melody by Florence Price, featuring poetry by Louise C. Wallace, night descends to conclude the day like a gentle mother tucking in her sleepy child.

Night

Louise C. Wallace

Night comes, a Madonna clad in scented blue.  
Rose red her mouth and deep her eyes,  
She lights her stars, and turns to where,  
Beneath her silver lamp the moon,  
Upon a couch of shadow lies  
A dreamy child,  
The wearied Day.



**Summer Moon (instrumental)**

**Florence Price**

We go deeper into evening with an instrumental work by Florence Price, written for jazz musician Memry Midgett in 1938. "Summer Moon" evokes the warmth, romance, and sensuality you might associate with a clear, balmy summer night. A beautiful blend of character piece and jazz etude, Price transports her listeners to their chosen summer destination - we invite you to close your eyes and imagine yours.



**Summer Storm**

**Margaret Bonds**

We end as we started: with a burst of excitement and energy, this one courtesy of Margaret Bonds! One of her four Songs of the Seasons, "Summer Storm" tells the story of two lovers who get caught in rain and thunder in the middle of an orchard. Blossoms fall from the trees like confetti, and cool rain brings relief on a hot, dry summer day in this celebration of love among the trees.

Summer Storm  
Langston Hughes

Thunder, July thunder  
And the wonder of lightning in the sky  
And a sudden gale that shakes the blossoms down  
In perfumed splendor to the grassy ground.

Thunder, July thunder  
And the wonder in my heart that I have found you  
Wonderful you, beneath the blossoms gay  
In the perfumed splendor of a July Day.

With the wonder of summer lightning in the sky  
And a sudden gale that shakes the blossoms down  
Like confetti in your hair, like confetti on the ground  
Perfumed confetti drifting down  
On the sweet and wonderful summer earth.  
The sweet, sweet summer earth.

There pillowed on the grass in the orchard's shade  
I kissed you and kissed you and kissed you and kissed you  
Till a sudden gale shook the blossoms down,  
Confetti in your hair, confetti on the ground.  
And then the rain, the soft, sweet rain came down.

We run down the road in the dust of July,  
We are happy for the rain, clean and cool from on high,  
In the dust, hand in hand,  
In the dust of July,  
Hand in hand, you and I,  
You and I, in July.

Thunder, thunder  
In my heart the wonder of love  
Thunder, wonder in our eyes  
The wonder of being in love, we two

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