

Ljos

Light beams warm
Trigger sap rising
Buds wake the dreamer
Blossoms fall
To nourish deep roots

KARI TAURING

I Hela Naturen Love is the greatest joy that Nature can give.

Little Otso Lullaby calms, weapons retract, sun warms the lovely rocks.

Klokkene Små Lilly of the Valley, white coral bells.
Homebound magic, my own garden. Inhale!

Virpoi Varpoi Easter witches switches – there is no start date
but what the pussy willows dictate.

Folkevisen I greet you in the next world – no future tense between us.
Only what is becoming.

World Tree Poem Let the old world fail. The old beliefs, release.
Grasp the new runes. The end begins it.

Sunna! Grandmother sun-rider, let us have a new light.

Bear Loves Birch Wisconsin black bear, your marks on Birch.
There are no bad deeds in Nature.

Mani! Grandfather moon-carrier, good men of the moon.
Beautiful reflection of sister's light.

Otso Created Spinning Sister in the stars, Wind, and Water Spirit.
Forest Mother rocks you. And thus you were born.

Vårfløyte Spring flute, new song for the turning wheel. Raido.

Komme Alle You have to dance it. Move with the poetry to fully understand.

Vandresang Staff in hand, we wander.

Kom Kjyra Even in the New World, cows feel the same as we;
lament our parting; joy in our return.

Farvel Gamle Rokken We are always connected.
Heart root healed and healing.

Produced by Kari Tauring and Drew Miller
Recorded between 2009 and 2016 in Minneapolis Minnesota
Additional recording, mixing and mastering by Scott Nieman at dubNemo Studio
Cover art by Aneesa Erinn Adams Logotype by Karin Odell
Art direction by Kari Tauring and Jeanie Miller Design by Drew Miller
Supported by one hundred nine Kickstarter donors during the final moon of 2015

Compositions and traditional arrangements C Kari Tauring (BMI), except as noted.

Thanks in advance to Drew Miller, Jeanie Miller, Scott Nieman and Lynette Reini-Grandell for the collaboration and friendship yet to come! A huge thanks to my dear husband, Greg, and my sons Oskar and Jack, for a wonderful, artful life. Drew and I are deeply grateful to our family, friends, and fans for believing in this work and supporting us through Kickstarter and so many other ways.

This is the light companion to Svart.

PC 2016 Kari Tauring and
DeSelby Productions, Inc.
KariTauring.com
OmniumRecords.com

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Track One I Hela Naturen

Traditional Swedish by way of Andrea Een. English lyric interpretation, Kari Tauring 2014. I have had the pleasure of singing this to honor marriages in Kansas, Finland, and most recently, here in Minneapolis for my sister and her bride!

Track Two Little Otso

Text lines 63-70 of Runo 46 from the Kalevala (Eino Friberg translation, 1988), a ninth-century work of epic poetry compiled by Elias Lönnrot from Karelian and Finnish oral folklore and mythology, sung in call and response with a traditional runo tune.

I began singing this duet with Lynette Reini-Grandell (who sings the Finnish) three years ago.

It delights me to no end to sing it with her. Maybe I will sing it with my goddaughter this summer! Väinämöinen, the poet magician, sings it to keep the bear sleeping while he kills it. However, I will not put it into that context for my goddaughter until she is ready to read the Kalevala for herself.

Otsonen, metsän omena,
Mesikämmen källeröinen!
Kun kuulet minum tulevan,
Miehen aimo astelevan,
Kytke kynnet karvoihisi
Hampahat ikenihisi
Ettei koske konsakana,
Liikuta lipeänänä!

Little Otso, woodland apple
Honeypaw, you dear stout fellow,
When you hear this good man coming,
Hear me stepping softly near you,
Knot your claws up in your fur
And your teeth inside your gums
So that they can do no harm
Even when you're on the prow!

Otsoseni, ainoiseni,
mesikämmen, kaunoiseni!
Lyöte maata mättähälle,
kaunihille kalliolle,
hongat päällä huojumassa,
kuuset päällä kuulumassa!
Siinä, otso, pyörteleite,
mesikämmen, käänteileite,

O my bearkin, you my only,
Honeypaw, my little beauty,
Just lie down on turfy tussock,
Go to sleep on a lovely rock
Where the tall pines sway above you
And you hear the fir trees humming.
There, my Otso, roll about,
Twist and turn, my honeypaw.

Track Three Klokkene Små

Traditional English children's song in Norwegian from Mike and Else's Norwegian Songbook (Skandisk, 1985). Tune by Kari Tauring 2007.

I have always loved this flower; the scent is heavenly. It was blooming in Norway when I was filming Alt for Norge and greeted me when I returned to my Minnesota home garden. The smell of it connects me to both lands and the beautiful spirits of both lands! That same spring (2009) Drew and I recorded this performance for Starwood Festival XXIX in one live take. It

was the first time I used a digital delay to loop my voice and my feather fan over a DJ effects box to summon the elves!

Klokkene små, på stilken slank og fin.
Se konvaller blomstrer her i hagen min. Å, om jeg kunne høre deres klan.
Men konvaller ringer kun til alvers sang.
Bell flowers small,
with stalks slim and fine.
Lilly of the valley
blooming in the garden mine.
Oh, if you could hear them ring.
When bell flowers ring the elves will sing.

Track Four Virpoi Varpoi

Finnish Charm collected in 1934 by Margery Edgar, "Finnish Charms in Minnesota and Finland," Journal of American Folklore, Oct.-Dec. 1934.

A Spring seasonal ritual for health, fertility, and prosperity. This is a community or neighborhood ritual, like "caroling" or "wassailing" at Winter Solstice or like "trick-or-treat" at All Hallows Eve. It is done when the pussy willows have bloomed (near Spring Equinox). Each household puts out food for the good elves (Maan Haltija in Finnish Pagan tradition, Nisse or Tomte in Norway and Sweden). Branches of pussy willow are cut and made into whisks. In the old days, one family owned the land. and the rest of the people were cotters. The people would travel through the farmstead to the door of Lord and Lady of the farm/village who, by holding the lands, "hold the people's luck." In turn, the people wish them health, well-being, and prosperity.

The Christian church allowed Finnish and Swedish children to continue a version of this ritual. On the Sunday before Easter (Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after Spring equinox), or Palm Sunday, children dress as witches and go door to door with pussy willows in one hand and a tea kettle in the other, collecting candy offerings from the grown-ups in the neighborhood. The church equates the pussy willows to the palm fronds placed on the dusty pathway of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem. Jesus is the Spring, the light of the world, forgiving his persecutors and returning to Earth in his glory-body after death. Chimneys are swept out the next day so the Easter witches (the old year; perhaps the old beliefs) can ride safely up and out on their broomsticks out of the houses to their gathering at the Blue Mountain by Maundy Thursday. All witches need to be at the Blue Mountain by Good Friday and are not to return until after the resurrection.

Virpoi, varpoi
Tuoreeks terveeks
Tulevaks vuodeks

Kuin monta varpaa
Niin monta vasikkaa
kuin monta oksaa
niin monta oritta
kuin monta urpaa
niin monta uittia

Pussy willow Switches
be fresh and healthy
be will with the coming year

as many twigs
so many calves
as many branches
so many colts
as many catkins
so many lambkins

Track Five Folkevis

Text by Åse-Marie Nesse (1934-2001), published in a poetry collection in 1978. Tune by Karl Fjogstad (1956-) with a dance first presented in 1982 at the Voss Folkehøgskule. Learned through “Our Favorite Songdansar” 2008, Leikarringen of Leif Erikson Lodge 2-001 and “Norske Folkedans Stemne,” edited and compiled by Christine Anderson.

The “Stavers in the House” here in Minneapolis often call this song the “Ragnarok Waltz: a pretty ditty about the end of the world.” Nesse mined verses from the Voluspa and other Sagas to create this depiction of the World Tree and the creatures thereon. The “fate sisters” or Norns – Urd (Is), Verdandi (Is Becoming), and Skuld (Should Become) are spinning the threads of oorlog for the world, thin and strong. The birds crow to signal the doom of the old gods. And Ratatosk, the squirrel, both disburses and gathers the seeds for the poems or runos of the next world tree.

Det står ein ask uti grønan lund
Kom vind, Kom vår
Der leikar livet kvar dag og stund
Kom sol, Kom sår

There is an ash in the holy green grove
Come Wind Come Spring
There life it plays every day around
Come Sun Come Sorrow

Tre norner står innved rot og spinn
kom vind, kom vår
Dei tvinner tråden så sterk og linn
Kom sol, Kom sår

Three norns sit under the root and spin
come wind come spring
They twine a thread so strong and fine
come sun, come sorrow

To fugler byggjer sitt reir på kvist
Kom vind com vår
Og songen er det som tagnar sist
kom sol, kom sår

Two birds sit up in the highest nest
come wind come spring
the song they sing is the last thing heard
come sun come sorrow

Eit ekorn smyg seg innunder blad
kom vind kom vår
Det sankar frø til eit vinterkvad
kom sol kom sår

A squirrel sneaks under the leafy branch
come wind come spring
Spreading seeds for a winter verse
come sun come sorrow

Track Six World Tree Poem

I wrote this for the performance piece Waking the Bear Two, as we contemplated the world tree imagery of the bear-skull pine, the medicine birch, the holy green ash... there are countless world tree stories. One of my favorites is the Nigerian Ife world tree that came from the palm nut brought by Oduduwa. The world tree chicken scratched the continents apart! For me, the point is that we must stay grounded and centered in the middle of our own tree if we want to survive and thrive in the new world to come.

Track Seven Sunna!

I used the tune and sentiment of the Lithuanian Saule by Kulgrinda to create a children's chant for the Heathen Family Gather at Northern Folk Gathering in 2010. In March 2015 I consulted with Val Miller, Jannika Schneider, and Beate Krebbs to create a version in German for Thor von Reichmuth. It was the favorite song of this seven-year-old who has since passed away from cancer. I was so glad to sing it with him and with his dear sister. I offer it on this album in memoriam.

Sunna, Großmutter
(Sun, Grandmother)
Fahrt am Himmel
(ride in the sky)
so haben wir genug
(so we have enough)

Track Eight Bear Loves Birch

Tauring, 2014. First presented at Waking the Bear Two. The birch is the favored tree of the women on my mother's Wisconsin family farm. In fact, the birch in front of my childhood home in Minnetonka is still growing!

This poem is based on a series of photos of the bear-scratching tree I took up at "the farm" (now owned and operated by my sister Lori and her spouse Renée). 2014 was a lovely spring; we had some good syrup that year.

Track Nine Mani!

From the Saule chant (see Sunna).

Mani - Großvater

(Moon, Grandfather)

Fahrt am Himmel

so haben wir genug

Track Ten Otso Created

Runo 46 vs. 355-458, Kalevala (same source as Little Otso). Music by Kari Tauring 2014.

Arrangement by Kari Tauring and Drew Miller. This was composed for theatrical interpretation for Waking the Bear Two with Lynette Reini-Grandell in 2015. We had done some stanzas from this selection in 2014 and the story just captured my heart. Carol Sersland and I choreographed a lovely dance pantomime for the show. Video is available on youtube.

Track Eleven Vårfløyte (Spring-flute)

An improvised tune for Spring 2016. This flute was made by Steinar Ofsdal and given to me by Sonja Lidsheim at the Siggdal og Eggedal Folk Museum in 2014. It is made of PVC wrapped with birch. Steinar calls it a Spring flute instead of a willow flute (seljefløyte) out of respect for the willow.

The flutes are traditionally made by teasing out the core of a willow tein as the sap rises in the springtime. The key of the flute varies with the length and width of the willow tein. It is an ephemeral instrument, drying and cracking with the heat of summer. Each flute has tunes they like to play. I lean towards the belief that these flutes should not be played before Spring Equinox and not much after Summer Solstice, and that they should never be forced to play a tune they do not want to play.

Track Twelve Komme Alle

An invocation and “runelokkr” (or runic calling song) that I wrote in 2003 for a special Winter Solstice service. Since then it has been translated into Norwegian, German, and Anglo-Saxon: all Indo-European rune-using cultures.

The pronunciation of the runes algiz, ehol, gifu / gebo, and manaz / mann changes with the language used and therefore will also change the meter slightly. It is a folk community song, meant to be shared widely and sung by many. Changes are always part of the folk tradition and to be expected.

“Komme Alle” was choreographed as a community circle dance in 2011 by Carol Sersland, supported by Minnesota State Arts Board, Legacy and Heritage funding. Singing for dancing changes the meter and performance of any song. This version is in Norwegian and in the meter of the dance.

Brief description of the dance:

All in a circle facing inward, arms to sides, feet shoulder width apart. Begin side-step with right foot, then left on the beat (medsol - with the sun) on first verse section “Komme, Komme alle, alle singen”

On the first rune, ehol, bring hands to heart center in “prayer form” and raise upward, then

outward, creating the ehol rune shape with the body, continuing side-step.

On the second rune, “gifu,” cross arms at the heart center to create gifu, continuing side-step.

The third rune, mannaz, (sing “Mannaheim”) lands on the tenth side-step. Stop and take four fast steps (one for each beat in “Mannaheim”) into the center of the circle, dropping arms to the waist of the people on the left and right, creating mannaz and tightening the circle.

On the final “Komme Komme Alle” take four slow steps back (one step for each “Komme” and two for “Alle”) dropping arms to sides for the next round. Repeat!

Track Thirteen Vandresang

Words and music Kari Tauring, 2007. The only other time this song has been recorded was live at the Cedar Cultural Center in 2009 as an end-of-the-night jam with Norwegian, English, runes and chants. There are three basic chords for guitar and the vocal parts were written to overlap. I hope you listeners play and sing with it!

Chants:

vandring

(wandering)

jorden

(the Earth)

øst, sør, vest, nord

(east, south, west, north)

Jordens vandring rundt solen

(earth wandering around the sun)

kua vandring rundt jordens

(cow wandering round the earth)

vandre saga

(legends of migration)

vandre eventyr

(folktales of wandering)

vandre med min vandre stav

(wandering with my pilgrims staff)

Jordens solen skal vi go?

(Earth, sun, shall we go?)

Kua kua jordens oh

(Cow, cow, earth, oh)

Kua, fehu stjernen sang

(Cow, fehu (rune), star song)

Sa kom fra himlens høy slott

(She comes from the heavens'
high castle)

Vandring, vandring skal vi go?

(Wandering, wandering, shall we go?)

vi er som kuer – og vi går

(We are like cows – and we go)

Track Fourteen Kom Kjyra

“Come Cow,” a kulokk from Hallingdal sung by Alice Everson of Blair, Wisconsin August 1946 from page 384 of James Leary’s Grammy®-nominated compilation, *Folksongs of Another America: Field Recordings from the Upper Midwest, 1937-1946* (published 2015).

On April 1, 2016 I performed it along with my cow horn and a special calling of the cow names from my mother’s dairy farming childhood in Wisconsin at a concert celebrating Leary’s work.

Kom kjyra Kom kjyra
Her kommer et dyr å tar dig
(here comes an animal to take you)

Å nei, da, aa nei, da
Ho mamma passer nok mig da
(my mamma will surely watch over me)

Track Fifteen Farvel Gamle Rokken

I learned this from Mike and Else’s *Norwegian Songbook* (Skandisk, 1985). It is from a play by Henrik Wergeland, written in 1884 at the height of Norwegian Romantic Nationalism.

From the time of the Black Death (around 1360), Norway was an underdeveloped colony of Denmark. In this 400 Year Night, Norwegians were not allowed to have schools, newspapers, infrastructure advancements, and the like. Danish (Norwegian Bokmål or book-learning language) replaced the Norwegian language and dialects as the national language, Danish money replaced the old financial systems... you get the picture. In 1814, Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden sparking a Norwegian Independence Movement that lasted until they were finally granted their own constitution in 1905. The intellectuals, artists, and political activists began to ask the question, “What does it mean to be Norwegian?”

Folk hero, Ivar Aasen, combed the countryside compiling a new language for Norway (Nynorsk), based on the dialects he found. The belief that true Norwegian-ness could be found only in the countryside which was “untainted by Danish city influence” inspired Hulda and Arne Garborg along with Klara Semb to travel, collect, and “refine” folk dances and songs from throughout Norway. They began the “bunad movement,” restoring folk dress. Along with others like Jørgensen and Moe, they collected folk songs and poems and wrote new works based on the oldest themes – often in Nynorsk, which was scandalous in the intellectual elite city circles. Musicians Ole Bull and Edvard Grieg set folk songs and styles from the country to classical compositions and even used the Hardanger Fiddle in concert (again, a cause for scandal). Painters like Dahl and Gude portrayed the wildness, independence, and Nature spiritual ethic of Norway and Norwegians.

Alongside this flurry of creation came the great exodus of immigration. Between 1825 and 1925 roughly one-third of Norway’s population left for America, mostly settling in Minnesota and surrounding states with a wave of migration to the West Coast and Texas. Norwegian-Americans are the 10th largest European immigrant group to the United States. Most of these immigrants never returned to their homeland, but were influenced greatly by the creation of culture and Norwegian identity happening there and preserved versions of the folk songs and language dialects that no longer exist in Norway today!

In this part of the play, the heroine Kari is describing how she and the animals are part of one another and that leaving (for America) will rip out both her heart and theirs. It is the quintessential immigrant theme song.

When I first learned it, I had a hard time singing it because it is so sad and it has my name in it. I am grateful for fast air travel and Skype.

Drew Miller and I recorded this performance as a demo in 2009, and even asked David Stenshoel to triple-track a violin trio section. But then we “shelved” it. I think it was my uncertainty with Norwegian that kept me from releasing it then. However the performance certainly captures my emotional state when I returned from filming Alt for Norge in 2009.

Farvel, gamle rokken!
Nå skal jeg deg miste!
Det bringer mitt hjerte i barmen å briste
Nå skal vi ei mere
om kvelden ved flammen,
du gamle veninnen min,
småsnakke sammen.

Ak! alt hva jeg ser,
i mitt hjerte har røtter.
Nå rykkes det ut.
Er det rart, at det bløder?
Dog ved jeg knap,
hvad jeg af alt skulde vælge.
Jo, med mig helst slæpte
jeg Vuggen til Helge.

Men værst er med Dyrene.
Smerte og Glæde
de føle som vi.
Hvor Guldblomma vil græde!
Og Bølingen, veed jeg,
vil raute i Bakken,
når Kari skal vandre
med Posen på Nakken.

Farewell old spinning wheel,
now shall I lose you.
It causes my heart to break in my chest.
Now we shall nevermore
in the evening by firelight
small talk together,
my dear old girlfriend.

Oh everything I see has roots in my heart
now it is being torn out,

no wonder it is bleeding!
But I scarcely know
what I should choose from it all,
Yes, I want to take with me
Helge's cradle.

But its worst with the animals,
pain and joy
they feel the same as we,
how Guldblomma will grieve!
And the cattle, I know,
will bellow on the hillside
when I, Kari, leave
with a sack on my back.