

## *The Harbinger Wren*, by Jan Carroll

### Lyrics and Liner Notes

#### **Caveat**

My spiritual, philosophical, and psychological perspectives are reflected in this work. I am not trying to proselytize you or evangelize you. I created this as a help and aid to my own journey. If you find something helpful in it, that's awesome. If it's not your cup of tea, no worries.

#### **Origin Story and Rough Around the Edges Recordings**

This work was created with what equipment and knowledge I had, at home, in the front room facing the street (you may hear, if you listen closely, a car going by, and the honk of the UPS truck, for example). I had been studying the work of Philippe Guillemant and Charles Eisenstein (still am), both of whom are seeking to understand where we, humanity, are right now and where we are going/could be going. I've also for a long time followed the work of Neil Douglas-Klotz. There are reflections of their work, which I'm so grateful for, here in places. I was wishing for some songs on these ideas that I could listen to that might help keep me on these higher, better paths, with encouragement and reminding of the various insights and guidances. Then I watched a video called *The Elephant 6 Recording Co* (New York, NY : Kino Lorber, 2023) and was hugely inspired by how the flock of young people depicted in the film used, in the 1990s, what they had on hand, not having much money for equipment, and discovering that they could still make music that people liked and enjoyed and that the process was in itself hugely enjoyable and that what they had on hand did in effect actually work well with what they were trying to say through their music. So I decided to make my own songs. I had a desktop computer with the software program Audacity on it, a reasonably good mic, lots of ideas, and now nothing to hold me back in just playing with it and loving the process. The voices are all me, and the instruments include a tambourine, a drum, a xylophone, a mariachi—all from the Savers thrift store—a recorder found on the discount table at BAM books, a guitar found in the neighbor's garbage, an ocarina gifted to me, and items found around the house like a saucepan lid, a wooden spoon, a plastic box of staples for a staple gun, a wooden candlestick, a pencil, and a string of four little bells that have been hanging in my window for years. So, yes, the work is a little rough around the edges (thus inspiring the name of my recording "company"—Rough Around the Edges Recordings), but to me that just makes it more endearing, and it speaks to the fact that we don't have to have lots of expensive equipment or even lots of training in an area to create. Just go for it! I hope that it inspires you on your spiritual path and on your creative path. Are they not one and the same? Oh, also, I've been a writer/poet for several years, but I had set an intention for guidance on where to go with it, feeling like my enthusiasm was flagging a bit. Various synchronicities came together to suggest this path—and I chose to follow them! It's been so much fun. Oftentimes while working on this project, I would look at the clock to find I'd been happily creating for two or three hours and it had seemed like time just flew! There were times, often when I had to fiddle with and figure out technology, during which I wasn't so much in flow, but they were still good learning opportunities.

#### **The Harbinger Wren**

Wren alights  
on the neighborhood weathervane  
with just enough weight  
to make its arrow pivot  
away from threatening skies.

Wren thus says trust your ballast.

Wren's song bright  
in the thick oppressive air  
with just enough clarity

to lift the predicament  
toward breathable ends.

Wren thus says trust your true friends.

Wren not a kite  
above a hand that tethers it.  
With confidence and free will  
to be grounded while it flies,  
beyond dictums it soars.

Wren thus says trust your quest, your course.

### **No Longer**

Kairos is, in Greek philosophy, the aspect of time who brings the possibility of a new way or action into Chronos, which is ordinary linear time, or the path we take without giving it much awareness. But we have to choose Kairos, to take its advice, and actually follow that new path. The book *Le Grand Virage de l'Humanité (The Great Turning of Humanity)* by Philippe Guillemant explains (my translation): "The 'passage' of time can in this way be understood as not existing other than through an act of observation of the consciousness. Which confirms the whole pertinence of the connection between the depth of consciousness and time. Which permits us, now, to define the second time, Kairos, in a way that flows from source, that is to say from a new line of time observed in the bond with consciousness. As long as we stay in the line of the same future, we're following Chronos. As soon as we change the line of time, we're following Kairos. When a new line of time appears in the future, we aspire to Aïon. 'To aspire to Aïon' means we've captured a new future potential in our connecting with Self (through joy [as a confirmation], trust [or confidence], or active intuition) and that we aspire to its realization. But, in order to truly realize it, again we must change one or several times the line of time in following Kairos...who is the guide who conducts us toward Aïon. We will in this way discover the meaning of life." (page 287) In Guillemant's work, he speaks of intentioning as the way we communicate with Kairos, and Kairos with us, by setting an intention and asking for insight or help to a specific question or need. Kairos answers in signs or synchronicities that cannot be explained by coincidence. He also explains, in great detail, how this theory of time is in synch with newest studies and understandings in quantum physics.

The pandemic turned the world upside down for me. I was feeling out of sorts and unsure of beliefs I had held for some time. I was struggling to find hope. Then I ran into Guillemant's work. Or did Kairos bring it into my life, knowing I was asking for guidance?

### **No Longer**

And everything came loose  
from the log jam  
and you were no longer  
weighted down  
you were free

And all of the frayed ends  
helped you hold on  
and you were no longer  
lost in space  
you were free

*And in the catastrophe  
you saw synchronicity*

*from your intentioning  
and Kairos's offering  
of new roads to what can be  
of new roads to choose, to see*

And all of the hot tears  
made a river  
and you were no longer  
stranded there  
you were free

And all of the fruitless  
paths fell away  
and you were no longer  
in that rut  
you were free

And all of their prisons  
could not keep you  
and you were no longer  
captured there  
you were free

### **Now Is**

Many possible futures exist. But we have to *choose* the bright, shining future we long for—AND then work toward it, in joy, even though it already exists. This is, at least in part, what that world looks like to me.

### **Now Is**

In this version everyone has everything they need.  
In this version our better selves have broken through the greed.

There is            no more war. Now is            inter-are.

In this version we understand what truth is once again.  
In this version our better selves have broken through the spin.

There is            no more fear. Now is            a joy sphere.

In this version consciousness flows freely from the heart.  
In this version our better selves have broken through the brain-is-everything part.

There is            no more power-over. Now is            this chosen future.

*The future **we** choose, the **future** we choose, the bright, shining future we choose  
you and I **choose** this/exists already...the future we choose*

In this version we celebrate the marvel of all life.  
In this version our better selves have broken through the strife.

There is            no more separation. Now is            interconnection.

In this version complexity and nuance are revered.  
In this version our better selves have broken through the sloganeered (the veneered!).

There is no more double-thinking. Now is heart-centered discerning.

In this version heart-consciousness creates a better path.

In this version our better selves have broken through the mechanistic math.

There is no more robots-R-us™ Now is a future luminous.

*The future we choose, the future we choose, the bright, shining future we choose  
you and I choose this/exists already...the future we choose*

### **Undertow Blues**

Really, no one can take your joy away from you. It's *yours*. To guard and to cultivate. But maybe that begins with saying NO to those who seem to be doing their best to trample it down. Including, as the song eventually says, ourselves: "I'm saying this to myself too, ya know." Yes, it's good to be aware of what is going on in the world, current events, etc—to an extent. But that isn't where joy comes from. "Set aside that low-down vibe." You decide. You know what I'm talkin' about, don't you?

### **Undertow Blues**

*(For E, who always nurtures joy)*

Please don't trample down my joy.  
Don't walk all over my joie de vivre.  
I know life's hard but honey today  
I'm leavin' behind that sad-place fever.

You call from the store.  
You pound on my door.  
You cry, cry, "Poor, poor, poor  
me—what IS all this for?"

So please don't trample down my joy.  
Don't drag me into some stupid bribe.  
I know life sucks, at times, but today  
I'm settin' aside that low-down vibe.

You send a dark note.  
You puncture my float.  
You diss, diss my haute, haute, haute  
couture, sayin', "What an ugly coat!"

But please don't trample down my joy.  
I'm sayin' this to myself too ya know.  
Life sure can be tough, but baby today  
let's both break free from that undertow.

Tu choisies un combat. (You pick a fight.)  
Tu donnes un coup de pied à mon chat. (You kick my cat.)  
Tu siffles, siffles, "Bah, bah, ba-a-ah (You hiss, hiss, "Bah, bah, bah)  
terrible—Je sens l'odeur d'un rat." (terrible—I smell a rat.)

S'il te plaît, ne piétine pas ma joie. (Please don't trample down my joy.)  
Ne fais pas pleuvoir sur ma journée ensoleillée. (Don't make it rain on my sunny day.)

La vie peut être difficile mais ce fois (Life can be difficult but this time)  
libérons-nous de ce ressac dégénéré. (let's free ourselves from that degenerate undertow.)

Life sure can be tough, but baby today  
let's both break free from that undertow.

I-I

Neil Douglas-Klotz, in his book *Revelations of the Aramaic Jesus*, explains the Aramaic translation of John 6:35 (“I am the bread of life”), *Ina'na lachma d'hayye*, as meaning “Connect your small I to the Greater I/Source and you'll know food that provides life energy.” Similarly, he conveys the Aramaic view of John 8:12, in Aramaic *Ina'na nuhre d'alma* (“I am the light of the world”), as carrying the sense of “Connect your small self to the Greater Self/Source and you will see and know more clearly.” The statement at the end of the song is from his book (page 142) and is followed by this: “This is a conclusion many scientists are now coming to: the brain, being part of what is perceived, cannot generate the knowing that perceives itself. Obviously, this challenges the supposition on which modern culture is based—that only material reality exists.” This connecting he speaks of is an ongoing process, something to continually return to. I made this song to help me in that ongoing connecting and refocusing, and in experiencing the ensuing fruits of that reconnecting.

I-I

Ina'na lachma d'hayye  
connect your small I  
to the Greater I  
this energizes  
gives a sustenance and fuel to  
the manifestation of  
what you experience as  
life in the physical world.  
Ina'na lachma d'hayye

Keep reorienting your small self  
toward connection with Greater Self  
in that is clarified  
what is and is not  
be a vessel of, a version of  
the light of and love of  
Orchestrating Consciousness

Ina'na nuhre d'alma  
connect your small I  
to the Greater I  
this illuminates  
gives an inner glow and knowing to  
the manifestation of  
what you experience as  
life in the physical world.  
Ina'na nuhre d'alma

Keep reorienting your small self  
toward connection with Greater Self  
in that is clarified

what is and is not  
be a vessel of, a version of  
the light of and love of  
Orchestrating Consciousness

Ina'na lachma d'hayye  
Ina'na nuhre d'alma  
Ina'na lachma d'hayye  
Ina'na nuhre d'alma

“Consciousness precedes material phenomena  
and cannot be defined in terms of them.”

### **After Too Long**

Sometimes we forget how, being human, interaction with other humans—face to face—is so much a part of what helps us thrive and truly live.

### **After Too Long**

I'm sorry, my fire tower, I've been amiss,  
a mess. Fault me as a tall glass of sour juice  
if it suits you. You can call me a hermit,  
an endomorph, a cryptogram with no  
answer key upside down on the second  
to last page if you want to. I'm sorry I slept  
through the deadline, again, the dead weight  
of the world an anvil I could not negotiate  
over the bridge. That you had to  
sit there alone mesmerized by flecks  
of snow not showing up on the radar.  
Had to listen instead to the woman go in  
to her long story of finding a gem  
in a dust storm in '55, glad at least  
she's still got most of her teeth.  
Sorry I lapsed, and the upward trend  
of our graph just hung there, suspended.  
Sorry I didn't call. Didn't answer  
your texts. Forgot how to walk  
in your shoes. Sorry I lost track  
of the gratifying residue of back  
& forth talk with you. The fog  
has been gauze thick, the ropes  
on the pulleys frayed, threatening to snap.  
The concept of happiness damp socks  
limp on the drying rack. This quicksand  
not a commentary on you, these cement boots,  
this staying put, a screen grab  
of the sharp claw pinning me down,  
the battery of my heart running low

about to turn off, the accumulated gunk  
of the times that can't be scrubbed clean.

Then there was one  
long-stemmed flower  
stuck through a hole  
in the weatherproofing  
I assume was your doing,  
a red carnation in winter's  
lugubrious black & white,  
rousing me, stirring me,  
a kind scarlet boutonniere  
piercing my storm door,  
a red-ink asterisk reminding me  
this is how we find each other  
lost in the haze, how we rework  
stop signs into places to start,  
how we come to, put our shoes on,  
pick our keys up, bring violets over.

### **Sisyphus**

In Greek mythology the angered or displeased gods punished Sisyphus by forcing him to push a huge boulder up a hill every day only to have it, once he reached the top, roll back down the hill, with this repeating endlessly. Sometimes trying to effect change in the world feels just like that—that we exert a lot of energy and seem to be making progress, but then something happens and most or all of the progress seems to vanish. This song is derivative of the work of Charles Eisenstein ([www.charleseisenstein.org](http://www.charleseisenstein.org)) who speaks instead of a different approach—to first connect with and be in relationship with Greater Consciousness and *then*, from that, act in the ripe and right timing. This song is also reflective of this passage from *Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home* by Toko-pa Turner. “When actions arise from the receptive still point they have real meaning. Ideas that emerge from this level of imagination serve more than the individual: they serve the great ecosystem from which our well-being is drawn” (pages 177–178). It isn't saying don't do anything; it's saying let's re-vision *how* and *when* we act.

### **Sisyphus**

You don't have to keep pushing pushing  
Sisyphus, Sisyphus, let it go

That Newtonian logic's just a dying myth, dying myth  
you don't have to exert a force to make change flow

Get that out of your head, your heart,  
cross the chasm of the upside-down you

the world not what you thought, you thought  
then drink in, be in, what's actually true

that journey through the bafflement meant  
something, there was a reason for

we're not the smartest here, smartest here  
there's a Greater Knowing, a Genitor

and when the time and place are ripe and right  
then, Sisyphus, It will let you know

what to do and how and where with whom  
to make Life and Beauty grow, grow, grow

You don't have to keep pushing pushing  
Sisyphus, Sisyphus, let it go

That Newtonian logic's just a dying myth, dying myth  
you don't have to exert a force to make change flow

Listen to the Greater Knowing  
through your heart knowing  
then do your part

It's not about beating down and winning over the other  
it's about creating something new together

Listen to the Greater Knowing  
through your heart knowing  
then do your part

It's not about arguing and convincing the other  
it's about bringing what you have, your gifts, to offer

Listen to the Greater Knowing  
through your heart knowing  
then do your part

Sisyphus, Sisyphus, let it go...

### **What I Would Have Missed**

Take a different route, try a different way, be mindful, aware, see what you notice, what you find. You might be pleasantly surprised. And, taking a different path than usual increases the chances of synchronicities happening.

### **What I Would Have Missed**

Had I taken the car (this morning  
on the fritz), I would not have met  
my neighbor just back from Belize  
who said when she got home  
she was going to start some seeds  
for her summer garden.

I would not have come across these  
footprints in ice yesterday's travelers left  
across from the Little Grand Theater.

That red-haired, red-bearded young man  
going the other way on the Grand Ave  
foot bridge, would not have called out,  
"Hello!" sort of laughing at me shielding



my face from the relentless north wind  
from upriver with one mitten held up.  
Nor would I have grinned too, countered  
“Dude, you’re not even wearing a hat!”  
And he would not have had the chance  
to smile and say, “It’s a beautiful day!”

The jogger, not jogging but shuffling along,  
would not have been able to say to me,  
“There’s more ice than I figured on” with  
me saying, “Right?!” Then seemingly out  
of nowhere, an older man with a cane  
and a dashing cap would never have held out  
one gloved hand as I looked up from the  
skating rink, I mean sidewalk, and as I  
took it, he never would have said, “Watch  
your step now” guiding me past it, me  
grateful, wishing him, “You have a really  
good day now, sir,” him saying, “You too!”

Had I not walked there, I never would have  
discovered, somehow not blowing away,  
this exotic, delicate spotted feather.

### **A Path Through This Exists**

Musically speaking, this song was inspired by Don Cherry’s “Bells Two,” which features a basic melody throughout, some improvisation on that melody, and a plethora of percussion and intriguing sounds, including what sounds to me like an elephant bellowing. My song takes as its theme that despite there being all manner of crazy and scary things going on around us (represented by the sound effects), and maybe even increasingly so, there is still a path through that (represented by the basic melody). I added some connective words to emphasize the journey and that we’re on it with each other. And that joy is, or ought to be, a close companion. “Joy is the initial spark, sustenance on the journey, and the experienced destination. Joy!”

### **Lifeboats**

In spring/summer of 2023 my musical co-inspirator Julie Majkowski and I were dabbling in musical/poetic improv. That is, either she would just start playing some music and I would improvise some words that music inspired, or I’d start with words and she’d follow with music. This song was born out of one of those sessions in her living room. I’m ever so grateful for the gift of collaboration we share. In this case, she began with music, so she initiated this song’s birth. Later, I developed it further. Before the pandemic, if I mentioned to anyone (which I didn’t very often) that it felt to me like Western civilization was falling apart, possibly dying, I got lots of weird looks and very few who agreed with me. Now so many of us are feeling that, though perhaps we each experience and understand that in different ways. So if Western civilization was a great ship tipping and sinking, might there not very well be lifeboats launched? Let’s envision those lifeboats out on the water.

### **Lifeboats**

Lifeboats on the water  
Oh, the water’s cold

Did you get on board one  
or are you going down?

Lifeboats on the water  
Oh, the water's deep

All across the world now  
broken systems fall apart

Lifeboats on the water  
Oh, the water's wide

Ship tips and slips under  
Oh, what the water hides

Lifeboats on the water  
Oh the water's dark

Many ancient peoples  
tell tales of flood escapes

Lifeboats on the water  
at the turning of the age

Will you be a lifeboat  
precious cargo in the night?

Lifeboats on the water  
Oh, the water's cold

Lifeboats on the water...

### **The Harbinger Wren (Reprise)**

Wren has seed and berry and worm.  
Wren has nest near water.  
But in the aftermath of catastrophe, of cataclysm,  
wren adapts, finds a way, practices rebirth,  
still wren, determined to live, to love,  
wren sings, builds anew.

