

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

## Birdsong

**“Spring is sprung, the grass is riz;  
I wonder where the birdies is?  
Some say the bird is on the wing ... Ain’t that absurd.  
I always thought the wing is on the bird.”**

*Anonymous*

The above – best in a Bronx or Brooklyn accent – has been attributed to Ogden Nash, e e cummings and Spike Milligan. But no one really knows its origins, so we can assume it was penned by that prolific writer, Anonymous. But you can guarantee that if you say, “Spring is sprung”, someone else is *bound* to respond with “The grass is riz”, and that will trigger a joint chorus of “I wonder where the birdies is?” Try it and see.

Now Spring has, indeed, sprung, *I* don’t “wonder where the birdies is”. I know *exactly* where they are. They’re right outside my window, bellowing their dawn chorus in the first rays of morning light. Aarrghhh! Now, don’t get me wrong. I like birdsong! But *not* when the ornithological Hallelujah Chorus wakens me when I don’t want to be awake. Which birds are the guilty ones? I have no idea. I can’t tell one birdsong from another. Perhaps I should educate myself rather than being stressed. I gather there are even Apps for that kind of thing nowadays. More work to do, I suspect.

Birds might sing to defend territory, the strength and complexity of their song being a warning to intruders. It can also be to attract a mate, as strength, age, breeding potential can all be communicated by song. Sometimes it’s a “courtship duet”, with the interplay of notes reinforcing the partnership. Or it could be general communication – safe perch here; plenty food there; good weather for the time of year ... that kind of thing.

Some ornithologists suggest that birds may also sing for pleasure. It’s possible that birds enjoy singing with other responsive birds nearby. When birds sing without territorial or courtship concerns, they may sing simply for beauty of the song and the enjoyment of producing it.

So, there you have it! And I was thinking that all this birdsong business was just an unwanted early-morning alarm call. As I’ve said ... more work for me to do to educate myself – and become less stressed!

### **A prayer for today**

*If the birds sing for pleasure, let their joy also be mine –  
even when I’m grumpy first thing in the morning. Amen*