

Reading
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
read by Jack Westgarth

1. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
2. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
3. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5. A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6. A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
7. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Reading
Symi Remembered

by John Ebdon

read by Frances Hutchinson

It was not the lark but church bells which awoke as at six thirty next morning, bells from many belfries. Tenors and trebles clanged and peeled both high and low, vying one with the other in a frenzied tintinnabulation to usher in Saturday and rouse us from our sleep. I yawned, stretched, indulged in all the rites performed by awakening *Homo sapiens*, sluiced my face and went out onto the verandah.

Beyond the narrow inlet to the bay, Turkey lay hidden in the early morning mist, and the sea as yet unvisited by the rays of the sun was smooth and nondescript in colour. A slight breeze ruffled the leaves of the olive tree making them whisper with pleasure, and near at hand a donkey brayed loud and long and brassily like a tanker's siren. In the far distance a cock crowed and was answered stridently by another arrogantly standing on the path below me, its chest puffed out, its crimson comb and wattles shaking with affronted pride. And from a hillside came the tinkling of goat bells as the herds began to graze.

It was seven fifteen when the huge deep orange orb, the daystar as William Blake called it, climbed swiftly over the brow of the hills and splashed the tops and upper slopes with molten gold. It touched a solitary white fleecy cloud, tinging its leading edge with Flamingo pink; it reached into the hollows and chased away the shadows; and it turned the sea into a mirror of shot silk. Not for the first time in my life I thanked God for the inestimable gift of sight.

For a while we swam, heads down and enchanted by the beauty of the marine world below us. We saw fan shaped opalescent shells, magnified by the depth of water to the size of dinner plates shining from their resting places on the sea bed; shoals of tiny fish playing follow-my-leader through gently waving weeds of many colours, coruscating as they flipped and turned as a single unit in obedience to a secret command; and a solitary octopus half hidden in the cleft of a rock.

Then, hoisting ourselves from the water and using our knapsacks as pillows, we lay upon the jetty to soak up the sun and listen to the lazy lapping of the sea against the wall. And as Yeats would have had it, 'peace came dropping slow'.

Reading
The Glory of the Garden

by Rudyard Kipling
read by Hallam Westgarth

Our England is a garden that is full of stately views,
Of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues,
With statues on the terraces and peacocks strutting by;
But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
By singing, "Oh, how beautiful," and sitting in the shade
While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives.

There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be done,
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders,
If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders;
And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden,
You will find yourself a partner In the Glory of the Garden.

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass away!

And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!

Reading

Ithaca

by *C. Cavafy* tr. *C. Trypanis*

read by Nicholas Westgarth

When you set out for Ithaca, ask that the journey be long, full of adventures, full of things to learn. The Laestrygonians and the Cyclops, angry Poseidon—do not fear them. Such as these you will never find on your way, if choice emotions touch your spirit and your flesh. The Laestrygonians, and the Cyclops and fierce Poseidon you will not meet unless you carry them in your heart, unless your heart sets them in your path.

Pray that your journey be long; that there may there be many summer mornings when, with what joy, what delight you will enter harbours you have not seen before; and will stop at Phoenician trading-ports acquire beautiful merchandise, mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony, and sensuous perfumes of all kinds—as many sensous perfumes as you can. Visit many Egyptian cities, to gather stores of knowledge from the learned.

Have Ithaca always in your mind. Your destination is to arrive there; But do not hurry your journey in the least. Better that it may last for many years, that you cast anchor at that island when you are old, rich with all you've gained on the way, not expecting that Ithaca will give you wealth; Ithaca gave you that splendid journey. Without her you would not have set out. She has nothing more to offer.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you. You have acquired such wisdom, so much experience, that you will have already realised what these Ithacas mean.