

Winter Solstice Song Book



Light is Returning

By Charlie Murphy

Light is returning
Even though this is the darkest hour
No one can hold back the dawn

Let us keep it burning
Let us keep the light of hope alive
Make safe our journey through the storm

One planet is turning
Circle on her path around the sun
Earth mother is calling her children home

Listen here: [Light is Returning](#)

Winter's Coming

By Kira Willey

Winter's coming on its tiptoes
Creeping in to lie with me
Pull the blankets round my body
Tuck them in beneath my feet

Wind is breathing through the woods
Flakes are flying soft and white
Rest like frosting on the hills
The trees are dressed in suits of ice

I raise my voice to cold and gray skies
Spring will bloom where now deep snow lies

Listen here: [Winter's Coming](#)

To Know the Dark



Poem by Wendell Berry, tune by Katie Hicks

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
And find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

Listen here: Sung by [Mink](#), Sung by [Katie Hicks](#)

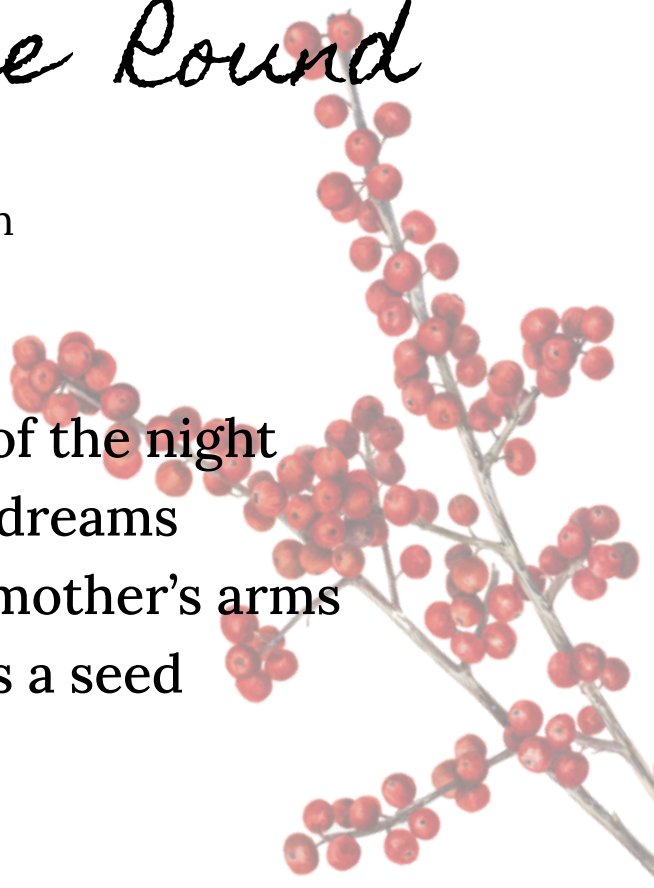
Roots, as shared by Katie Hicks: "[The words are from] a poem by Wendell Berry that I put to music. Whenever it is taught I want Wendell Berry to be credited for the words. [The song] came to me one night, around the solstice, while I was sitting on my bed in the Honey Shack (a little shack I was living in at the time in Bonny Doon, CA where a colony of bees live in the walls). I was asked to bring a song the next day at a kids' program and it was going to be the solstice, but I didn't know any solstice songs, so I looked up one of my favorite authors, Wendell Berry, and sure enough he had a solstice-themed poem called "To Know The Dark." As I was sitting on my bed with a poem in hand, with the bees buzzing in the wall next to me, and the rain falling outside my window, the melody just flowed out easy and smooth as if it were there all along."

Activity idea: invite children to create visual art related to nocturnal creatures; invite them to move like those creatures while the song is sung

Winter Solstice Round

by Becky Reardon

Deep down in the belly of the night
Dream deep winter dreams
And lie safe in your Grandmother's arms
Still as a seed, still as a seed



Listen here: [Winter Solstice Round](#)

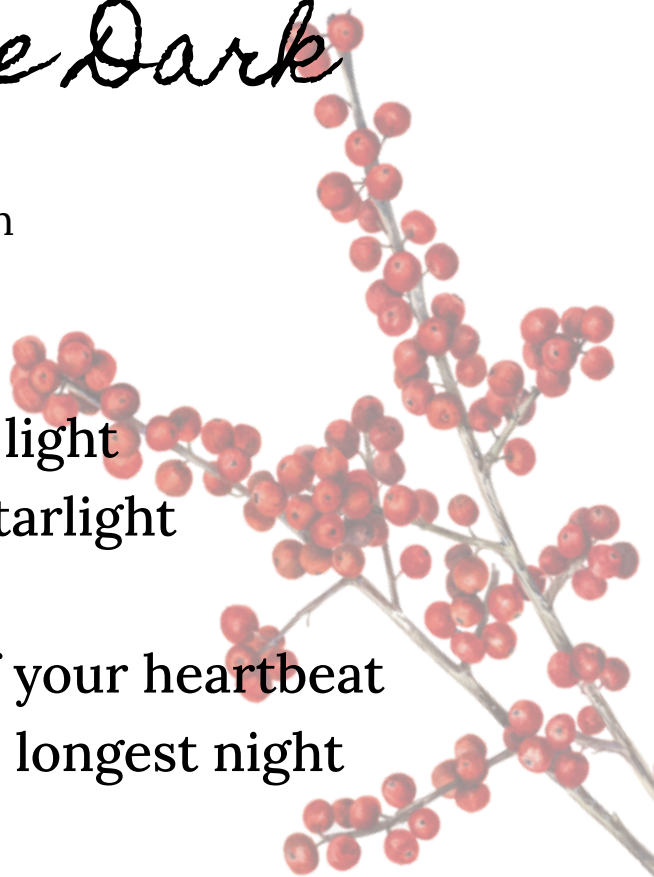
Roots: Drawn to New Mexico in the early 90's, Becky entered an initiatory time of camping and hiking in desert canyons and the high mountains. She responded to the beautiful world around her by improvising songs to the moon and stars, and to the rocks and canyon walls, She found herself harmonizing with the calls of birds and the ripples of wild streams, and scatting counter-rhythms to the pulse of her feet on the trail. Out of these joyful experiences she fashioned songs and rounds for community gatherings celebrating the solstices and other ancient holy days, and for theater groups and women's circles creating ceremonies of passage to the underworld, rebirth, transformation and affirmation.

Activity idea: offer this song as a form of quieting meditation, with children curled up (maybe wrapped in a nap blanket or winter coat) like a seed while you sing to them.

Dancing to the Dark

by Becky Reardon

In the dark in the light
In the no light but starlight
Turn around
Turn around to the sound of your heartbeat
Dancing to the dark on the longest night



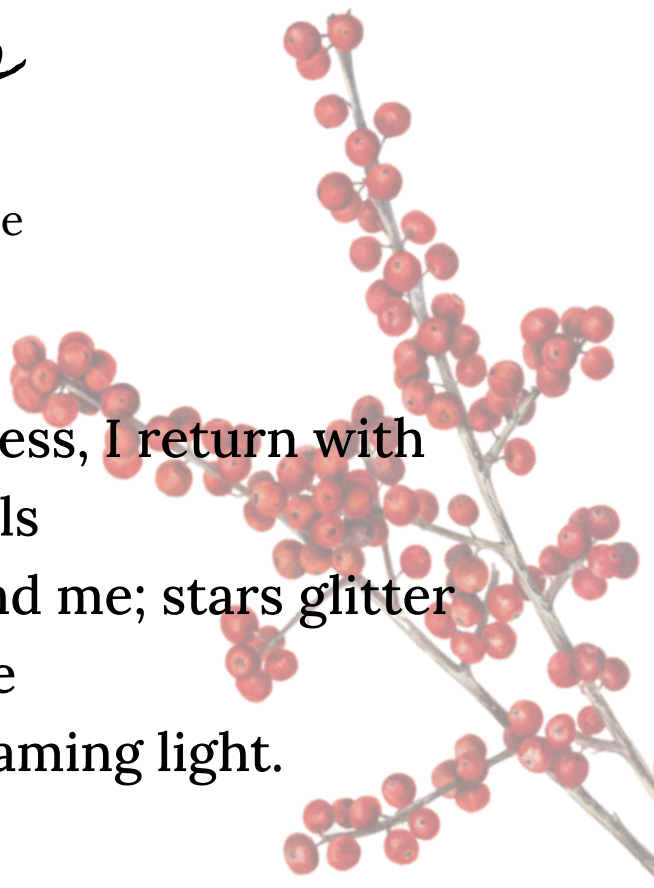
Listen here: [Dancing to the Dark](#)

Activity idea: invite everyone to dance while singing this one, with a special movement for the beat just before the phrase "longest night."

Jewels

by Barbara McAfee

Every time I go into the darkness, I return with
fistfuls of jewels
Midnight velvet wraps all around me; stars glitter
brilliant above
Dreaming darkness, dreaming light.



Listen here: [Community Songs](#)

Roots, as shared by Barbara McAfee: "This song grew out of a conversation I had with a voice coaching client many years ago. The person was struggling to heal after a traumatic brain injury and thought singing would help her brain recover. It did. Meanwhile, when she was having a particularly hard day, I heard myself saying these words to her: "Every time I go into the darkness, I return with fistfuls of jewels." It didn't feel like me talking, but some larger and wiser being. I filed the line away in my memory. Then in a hot tub under the stars on the south shore of Lake Superior, it found a melody and a second line: "Midnight velvet wraps all around me; stars glitter brilliant above." The third line arose in a community song circle. This song baby has traveled far and wide and is a winter solstice favorite in many communities."

Activity idea: invite everyone to improvise movements to go with each of the phrases of this song. Either your group could improvise movements and choose which ones everyone will do together for each phrase, or you could leave it more free-form for each to do their own interpretation.

Bless the Turning

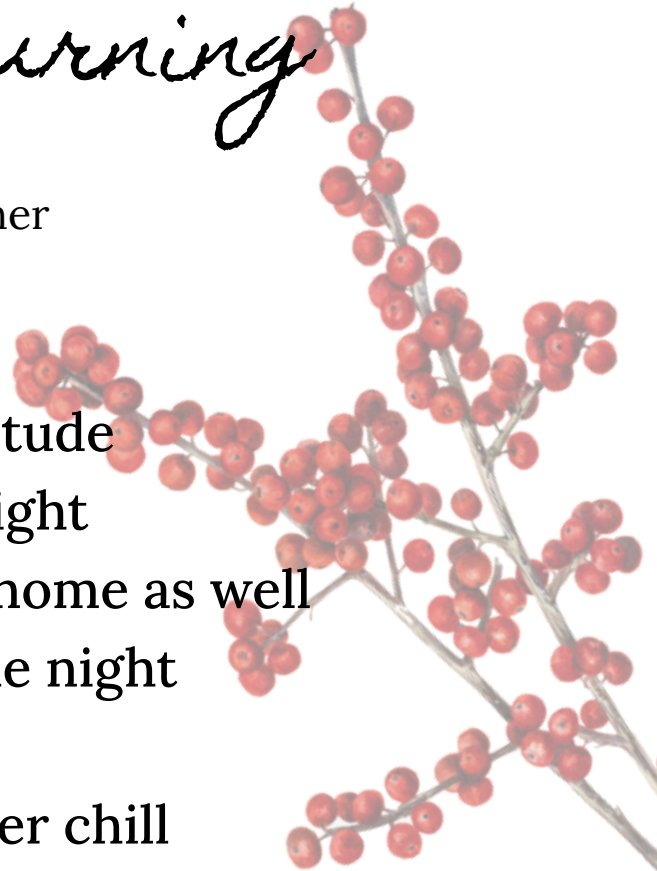
by Gretchen Sleicher

In the nest of solitude
Dreams burn bright
And the darkness that is home as well
Feeds us through the night

Blessed be the winter chill
And the time of grieving
Bless the turning toward the light
And the time of receiving

Listen here: [Recording one](#), [recording two](#)

Activity idea: this song could be sung while crafting your tissue paper lanterns, and/or while lighting and walking with them. Lantern Swap: perhaps invite everyone to put their lantern in a central place, and one by one to select a lantern other than the one they created to take home, a practice of letting go and receiving.



Snow Falling Softly

by Kate Sutherland

La La Lu...
La la lu lu, La lu
Lu la la dee dah

Snow falling down
blankets the earth
there is a purity
in the quietest of sounds
I turn my face
towards this certainty

I feel the light
I spin around
crystals of white
drift to the ground

Snow falls with grace
upon my heart-- a silent settling
it's Winter's embrace
and it slows me down
I focus inwardly

I feel the light
I spin around
crystals of white
drift to the ground



Listen here: [Snow Falling](#)