

GONE TO FLOWERS – AMY HOPWOOD – LYRICS AND CREDITS

- 1 – A nice wooden bench
- 2 – Breadcrumbs
- 3 – I'd rather be older (than dead)
- 4 – It doesn't matter now
- 5 – She became a bird
- 6 – All shall be well
- 7 – Igor Potemkin meets Bayun the cat
- 8 – Like a leaf
- 9 – Never said
- 10 – River and fish
- 11 – The closest thing to holding hands
- 12 – In the whistling of the wind
- 13 – East of the sun and west of the moon

CREDITS

Amy Hopwood – all vocals and instruments, except:

Sherida Katerina – violin on tracks 1, 4 and 11

Stuart Faulkner – accordion on track 3

Tobias Raabe – guitar on track 7

Coralie Hopwood – guitarron and cuatro on track 8

Sailor's Return sessions (at Wessex Folk Festival) – chorus singing on track 3

Janne, Clair, Terri and Darren – additional singing on track 3

Maisie the cat – purring on track 7

All songs written and produced by Amy Hopwood, except track 8 (traditional).

A massive thank you to my wonderful Patreons – Miriam Stalzer, Alasdair and Celia MacDonald, Averil Pardey, Miranda Tunnicliffe, Patrick Swainson, Ellen Vrana, Sue Thomas, Elaine Hall and Marian Bore – your support and encouragement means a huge amount to me.

Thanks also to everyone who responded to my strange requests via newsletter or social media... Your thoughts on the irritations of getting older ended up in track 3; your heirlooms are mentioned in track 11 and of course your "ancestor" voices can be heard on track 2! Thank you so much for being a part of my music!

LYRICS

A NICE WOODEN BENCH

Some people like the tradition
Of a gravestone stood at their head
A place to sacrifice flowers
And remember the life of the dead

Some people they want a spectacle
A last flight high in the sky

Their ashes in rockets or fireworks
Exploding in front of our eyes

*But I think I'd quite like a bench
With a lovely old view of the sea
Where strangers can quietly sit
And ponder their mortality
Yes, give me a nice wooden bench
That will do fine for me*

For some their grave is a statement
With a pyramid built in their name
Or a crypt or a mausoleum
Forever marking their fame

For some the deep blue sea beckons
And they tell us that their dying wish
Is to sink to the floor of the ocean
And become extra food for the fish

*But I think I'd quite like a bench
With a lovely old view of the sea
Where strangers can quietly sit
And ponder their mortality
Yes give me a nice wooden bench
That will do fine for me*

Instrumental (chorus)

I long to return to nature
To the earth and the birds and the bees
I'll return as a million daisies
If you scatter me under the trees

*Then give me a nice wooden bench
With a lovely old view of the sea
Where strangers can quietly sit
And ponder their mortality
Yes, give me a nice wooden bench
That will do fine for me*

*Oh give me a nice wooden bench
With a lovely old view of the sea
Where strangers can quietly sit
And ponder their mortality
Yes, give me a nice wooden bench
That will do fine for me*

BREADCRUMBS

One hundred billion people have walked this earth before
One hundred billion people every day it's even more
And each and every one of them has stories they could tell
Of succeeding and of failing and of how to live life well

They laid a trail of breadcrumbs in the fairytales they told
They wove a lot of wisdom through the sayings we still hold
Our ancestors, our forebears, although they are here no more
They knew that things to come will cast their shadows well before

Your granny's, granny's grandma, she would know just what to do
When the one you love has told you that they no longer love you
And your great, great uncle twice removed had many things to say
On how to handle death and loss and how to find your way

When you need to hear that in the end the good ones will prevail
Or find some hope that help will come when you become too frail
To know that kindness is returned and you are not alone
Just follow all those breadcrumbs that your ancestors have sown

I'D RATHER BE OLDER (THAN DEAD)

An evil fairy visited me
The day that I turned forty-three
And every year since, she's come round for tea
Bringing gifts that I don't want
A lottery takes place every day
She gave me the tickets and now I must play
Which part of my body will bother me today?
It's all the fun of the fair

I'd rather be older than dead
I'd rather be older than dead
My body is ageing, but I'm not complaining
I'd rather be older than dead

One year she came with art supplies
To decorate me was her surprise
With wrinkles and crows feet around my eyes
And a sprinkling of liver spots
Well she turned my hair from brown to grey
Then from my scalp she took some away
And put it in places I'd better just say
I'd prefer that it was not

Into my joints some glue she poured
Kneeling is something I'll be doing no more

It's a complex manoeuvre just to get off the floor
A military operation
No roly-polys or cartwheels for me
But the fairy she gave me gift number three
It's a set of percussion that lives in my knee
I have rhythm wherever I go

She gave us a brand new game to play
You've to guess at the words I'm trying to say
But I do wish we didn't have to play it every day
This endless game of charades
Then last year she gave me a fun new quest
In every town from east to west
To locate the toilets I am now obsessed
Well, it's nice to have a hobby

Well, maybe that fairy is not quite so bad
With every new gift another year I've had
And many a reason to be happy and glad
Presented along the way
So I'll love my old body and I'll trust in her plan
I'll be happy today, just as I am
And I'll raise my old voice as loud as I can
And this is what I will sing...

IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW

I used to worry which of us would die first
Which one of us would be left on our own
How we'd have to try and cope without the other
Just rattling round inside a lonely home

Oh I thought that we'd be growing old together
I wondered would we age well side by side
Would your hair turn grey and would you like my wrinkles
Would the spark of love remain within your eyes

*But it doesn't matter now, no it doesn't matter now
No it don't matter any more
You told me you don't love me, you told me you would leave
All I could do was open up the door*

I was sad that as we chose to have no children
No tales would be shared of our wedding day
And no one would know those flowers in our garden
We planted 'cos they were in my bouquet

*But it doesn't matter now, no it doesn't matter now
No it don't matter any more*

*You told me you don't love me, you told me you would leave
All I could do was open up the door*

Instrumental

*But it doesn't matter now, no it doesn't matter now
No it don't matter any more
You told me you don't love me, you told me you would leave
All I could do was open up the door
So I stood there and opened up the door*

SHE BECAME A BIRD

She'd never really noticed the birds
Not until she got ill
But as her health got steadily worse
More birds came to her windowsill
So she'd go to the garden to feed them
On days that were warm and bright
She'd sit on a bench and she'd watch them
She would learn from them how to take flight

*Soaring, swooping, light as their feathers
Swirling birds dance high in the sky
Each has a song they will never stop singing
Each has the freedom, the freedom to fly*

Before too long she couldn't go outside
Her world was closing in
But still she watched her favourite birds
Through the window of her kitchen
Sometimes it seemed like they called to her
And like she was answering them
Often she seemed very far away
As she talked with her new feathered friends

And now as death was drawing closer
She couldn't leave her bed
But still she seemed to be watching those birds
If only within her head
Loved ones came and gathered around her
Her breathing could barely be heard
And once they'd cracked the window ajar
Her last breath flew out as a bird

Finally she's released from her body
No more confusion or pain
For so long she'd watched all those beautiful birds
And now she was one and the same

Floating, gliding, swooping and looping
Free and wild and bursting with joy
She sings as one of a thousand small voices
A song that death cannot destroy

Sometimes I think she's come to my garden
She watches head cocked on one side
I smile, I nod, I tell her that I still
Recognise her from the glint in her eye
But mostly she's just swooping and diving
Waltzing around in the sky
One day I'll fly up there and she'll meet me
I'll become a bird too when I die

ALL SHALL BE WELL

All shall be well
All manner of things shall be well
This too shall pass

IGOR POTESKIN MEETS BAYUN THE CAT

Igor Poteskin was so very ill, so very sick and so very tired
So, Igor Poteskin he said to his friends "oh what can make me well?"
The friends of Igor Poteskin did say, in the pub they did say, his friends they did say
"Up in the mountains a magic cat dwells and he can make you well"

*Ohh, but you must take care, there's good and there's bad in the cat that lives there
Ohh, he'll sing you to sleep and then he'll gobble you up
Ohh, but you must take care, there's good and there's bad in the cat that lives there
Ohh, he'll sing you to sleep and then he'll gobble you up*

Igor Poteskin he laughed at his friends, ignored his friends, he mocked his friends
For Igor Poteskin he might not be well, but he wasn't scared of a cat!
And so his friends they drew him a map, on an old beer mat they drew him a map
And Igor Poteskin strode into the night, in search of Bayun the cat

Ohh, but you must take care...

Igor Poteskin the mountain he climbed, up through the woods and into the sky
Perched in a tree top the cat he did spy, and demanded the cat make him well
At Igor's bad manners he gave a small sigh, but Bayun the cat had a glint in his eye
And then he started to purr so loud the leaves from the trees they all fell

*I'll purr for you, I'll sing for you and tell you tales of make believe
I'll purr for you, I'll sing for you and fix what makes you sick
But if I make you fall asleep then you should know you'll never leave
Beware for if you go to sleep your body's mine to keep*

Soon Igor Potemkin he felt very good, so very fit and so very well
And all of that day Igor danced and he sang, along with Bayun the cat
Before too long Igor wanted to sleep, just forty winks, a little cat nap
For Bayun he sang so soft and so sweet, why should he be scared of a cat!

I'll purr for you...

But Igor Potemkin he fell fast asleep, out like a log, he slept like a dog
Igor Potemkin had one day of health, but his life he had exchanged
And Bayun the cat had a lovely warm feast, a wonderful feast, a marvellous feast
Bayun the cat he prefers all his meat to be healthy and free range

Ohh, but you must take care...

LIKE A LEAF

(Trad. aka "The life of a man")

As I was out walking one morning at ease
Viewing the leaves as they fell from the trees
All were in motion appearing to be
And those that were withered they fell from the tree

*What's the life of us each any more than a leaf
We all have our seasons so why should we grieve
For though in this wide world we work and we play
Like a leaf we will wither and must fade away*

And if you'd seen those leaves just a few days ago
How bright and how green they all seemed to grow
'Til frost came and bit them and withered them all
A storm came and shook them and down they did fall

Down in the churchyard many names you will see
Fallen from this world like leaves from the tree
Old age and illness upon them did fall
Like the leaves they did wither and fell one and all

NEVER SAID

As children we heard what never was said
Filled silence with speculation
Trying to make it all make sense
Creating our own explanation
And so we invented the reason, the why
An act of self-preservation
We had no idea what the adults went through
Their troubles and motivations

*Never said, never said, we heard loud and clear what was never said
Never said, never said, we heard what was never said*

As adults we still hear what never was said
Believe it without hesitation
Your grandmother's fear of being too loud
Is gifted to your generation
A silent poison hides in your mind
Shrinking your aspiration
Invisible bars locked around you for life
Of fear and self-limitation

Whatever it was we heard as a child
We now have some new information
Digging in deep and thinking it through
Could lead to a revelation
The older we get, the more we reach
A sobering realization
Whatever was said, or never was said
The future is our own creation

RIVER AND FISH

(All parts sung concurrently)

On flows the water
Onward it goes
Sometimes it rushes
Sometimes it slows
Never will stop now
Onward it goes
A path never-ending
Onward it flows

On flows the water
Onward it goes
Sometimes it rushes
Sometimes it slows

I will always live within this water
I will always make it my home
A flash of silver, darting and glinting
I will be here my whole life

This home it flows, all around me
It contains all that I need
A flash of silver, darting and glinting
If I left here, I would die

I will always live within this water
I will always make it my home
A flash of silver, darting and glinting
I will be here my whole life

THE CLOSEST THING TO HOLDING HANDS

The spatulas, the wooden spoons
That have seen better days
The buttons in a barrel box
With which we used to play
The battered saucepan that our childhood
Meals were cooked within
The pencils and protractors
In an ancient biscuit tin

*They're just hand-me-downs and pass-alongs
The strangest souvenirs
We keep what others might call trash
From those no longer here*

My granny's Kitchen Devil knife
Is simple and it's small
The plastic handle's scuffed with use
The blade's not sharp at all
I'm sure she'd be surprised
That I have kept that knife so long
But it keeps her always in my mind
It keeps her memory strong

*And when I touch the things she touched
A magic starts to flow
My hands are moulded to the shape
That her hands used to know
And it's the closest thing to holding hands
The closest thing we find
It's the closest thing to holding hands
Across the great divide*

He's a got a whole shed full of tools
They're shiny and they're shrill
But the one he'd never part with
Is his father's old hand drill
He knows his dad saved hard for it
And bought the best he could
The cogs still run like clockwork
And the handle is the smoothest wood

*They're just hand-me-downs and pass-alongs
The strangest souvenirs
We keep what others might call trash
From those no longer here
For when we touch the things they touched
A magic starts to flow
Our hands are moulded to the shape
That their hands used to know
And it's the closest thing to holding hands
The closest thing we find
Yeah, it's the closest thing to holding hands
Across the great divide*

She'll always keep that wooden broom
That stands beside the fridge
It was in her childhood kitchen
And for her it forms a bridge
To the days her parents were in love
And she was half as tall
That broom shone bright in the corner
Against an orange wall

They're just hand-me-downs and pass-alongs...

IN THE WHISTLING OF THE WIND

Every single atom in me
Was something else before
And I'll go on in time to be
Something else once more
And I will dance and swirl around
Like dust in a beam of sun
And when that dust has settled down
My new life has begun

But if you want to speak to me
The best thing you can do
Is sing your song into the wind
So I can hear it too
And in the whistling of the wind
I'll send my love to you
And in the whistling of the wind
I'll send my love to you

EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
Walk on in the blue dusky light

For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
Where mistakes can all be put right

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
And follow the owls and the bats
For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
To the place you will find on no maps

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
And away to the edge of the world
For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
Where the truths of our lives are unfurled

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
Lie down and close your eyes
For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
You will sleep under bright starry skies

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
Allow your tired eyes now to rest
For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
Where the tired and the weary are blessed

Set your back to the sun, turn your head from the moon
And let yourself float on the sea
For it's east of the sun, and it's west of the moon
Where you'll find me love that's where I'll be